IT'S UNAFRICAN PLACING ELDERLY PARENTS IN CARE HOMES PAGE 2

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NEW "ERROR"

ZANU PF STILL HUNTING DOWN, HARASSING OPPOSITION POLLING AGENTS, OBSERVERS MONTH AFTER ELECTION - SAYS HUMAN RIGHTS ORGANISATION, DESCRIBES BEHAVIOUR AS A SEVERE THREAT



By Leopold Munhende
Chief Correspondent

THE Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum (ZHRNGO Forum) has revealed Zanu PF officials are still hunting down and harassing opposition supporters who stood as agents and some local observers, just over a month after August's elections.

In a report titled The New "Error" focused on Zimbabwe's post-election period between vote-casting day and September 30, ZHRNGO Forum describes the behaviour as threatening genuine attempts at democracy.

The report chronicles 153 cases of alleged state or party-sponsored organised violence, including two killings of perceived opposing individuals.

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New Zimbabwe | NEWS

Zanu PF still hunting down, harassing opposition polling agents...

from page 1

An independent body to investigate the cases was suggested.

"The unprecedented levels of post-election victimization are not only uncharacteristic of a victorious political party but pose a severe threat to genuine democratic consolidation in Zimbabwe.

"The Forum and some of its member organisations continue to receive distress calls from presiding officers, polling agents and some local observers who are being harassed for the work that they did in the just-ended harmonised elections."

Zimbabwe has a history of politically motivated violence stretching to the 1980s when late President Robert Mugabe unleashed a North Korean 5th Brigade on perceived supporters of opposition Zapu in Matabeleland and Bulawayo.

As a result, an estimated 20,000 mainly Ndebele-speaking people were killed.

Targeted attacks on opposition figures and supporters extended into the 2000s.

They culminated in a dark 2008 electoral period that claimed almost 500 lives in an attempt to reverse Mugabe's loss to late MDC-T President Morgan Tsvangirai.

Two human rights lawyers, two Citizens Coalition for Change (CCC) legislators and about five councillors have been arrested in the month under review.

A losing candidate from within CCC Patrick Cheza has also been jailed within the same period.

610 Zimbabwe National Students Union (ZINASU) were also arrested on charges ZHRNGO Forum has urged government to drop.

Adds the report: "Given the precarious political environment, the country finds itself in presently in the aftermath of the 2023 Zimbabwe Harmonised Elections, the Forum accordingly calls upon members of the diplomatic community to urgently call upon the Government of Zimbabwe to act immediately to put an end to the unprecedented levels of post-election victimisation in the country.

"To show a genuine commitment to do so by setting up an independent commission of inquiry to conduct thorough, transparent and expeditious investigations into all reported instances of post-election related human rights violations cited in this report and to make the findings of the investigation public.

"To call upon the Zimbabwe Republic Police (ZRP) to investigate and bring to justice the killers of Mayibongwe Dube and Persuade Mandara as well as to ensure justice and closure for the family of Tinashe Edson Chitsunge (16) who died as a result of pre-election OVT on 3 August 2023 by bringing the perpetrators to justice."

It's unAfrican placing elderly parents in care homes

• says social worker; Minister pleads removal of 'witches' tag

By James Muonwa
Mash West Correspondent

HIGH numbers of inmates in old people's homes across Mashonaland West province is an indicator that moral fabric has collapsed and African ethos diminished among Zimbabweans, a senior social worker has said.

Speaking during belated International Day of Older Persons 33rd commemorations held at Chengetanayi Old People's Home in Chinhoyi this Friday, provincial social development officer, Agnes Mutowo, said the trend of placing aged parents and relatives in care homes was unAfrican, but sadly the numbers of inmates kept rising.



"It is unAfrican for us to put our parents in institutions but we are seeing this sad development on the rise. The three homes in the province, Chengetanayi and Nazareth in Chinhoyi as well as Benevolent in Kadoma have a total population of 80 inmates, and this high number is not pleasing.

"You wonder where children of these older persons are and whether their conscience clean knows they dumped their father or mother in a home. We encourage families to look after their elderly members, be they parents or relatives, so they die peacefully among their kith and kin," said Mutowo.

She said the inmates' age range in the three homes in the province was between 65 and 104 years.

The social welfare boss lamented the neglect faced by older persons.

"Old people face neglect, but my wish is that we treat them as infants who need extra care. There are sad stories of the elderly chased away from their houses, denied food or beaten up. We need to give them special care. We have to respect our culture. They have a right to be cared for."

The older persons population across Mashonaland West now averages 108 000, both in institutions and those in family set ups.

Of the statistics, Mutowo explained, more were female due to their health-consciousnes which prompts them to get expert help whenever they fall sick while men don't seek medical assistance early, hence they succumb to various treatable ailments.

Addressing the same gathering, Mashonaland West Provincial Affairs and Devolution Minister, Marian Chombo, outlined government had legislated protection and care of the elderly.

"The older persons are supported by the Older Persons Board established under the Ministry of Public Service Labour and Social Welfare. The board is responsible for coming up with policies which affect the welfare of older persons.

It also acts as a watchdog to ensure that government ratifies all conventions relating to older persons," she said.

"What is coming out of these objectives is the need to respect, and protect older persons to allow them to continue to enjoy their rights as enshrined in the Constitution of Zimbabwe under the Bill of Rights and the United Nations (UN) Conventions on Older Persons."

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Chicken Inn wins trademark battle, Chicken Slice barred from using the word "luv"

By Mary Taruvinga

INNSCOR Africa Limited's Chicken Inn has won a trademark battle against Slice Distributors (Pvt) Ltd, also trading as Chicken Slice.

The Supreme Court Friday put an end to the dragging legal dispute ruling that Chicken Slice was indeed infringing on its competitors trademark.

The ruling follows a successful appeal by Inscor which approached the upper court appealing against a High Court ruling in favour of Chicken Slice.

The full judgment was not readily available.

Earlier this year, High Court Justice Sylvia Chirawu-Mugomba dismissed Chicken Inn's application after it filed an application in 2019 seeking an interdict against Chicken Slice for using its trademark, 'Luv' and its colours.

Chicken Inn took the rivalry with Chicken Slice to court arguing that the latter had used 'Luv' in its burger and grill logo.

The company also argued it has always used 'Luv Dat Chicken' since 1987 before Chicken Slice started using 'I Luv it' on its burger boxes.

Chicken Inn submitted that the resemblance of the trademark and colours confuses consumers of their products.

Chicken Slice rebuffed the accusations arguing that Chicken Inn doesn't not own exclusive rights to the tagline 'luv'.

In delivering judgement, Justice Sylvia Chirawu-Mugomba said besides the word 'luv', the marks used are not similar and are used on the burger rather than the Chicken Slice logo.

"In my view, a national customer who encounters the products of the plaintiff and the first defendant is not likely to be confused by the difference between them," said the judge.

Now this has been set aside.

ICT Perm Sec ignores Mnangagwa directive barring international travel; spotted in Saudi Arabia



POTRAZ DG Kallisto Machengete, ICT Minister Mavetera and ICT Permanent Secretary Beaullar Chirume at the Universal Postal Union (UPU) Extraordinary Congress in Riyadh

By Staff Reporter

INFORMATION and Communications Technology (ICT) Permanent Secretary Beaullar Chirume is expected to answer tough questions from President Emmerson Mnangagwa's Office after defying a directive barring officials in her position from travelling with Ministers out of the country.

Chirume travelled to Saudi Arabia with newly appointed ICT Minister Tatenda Mavetera for a Universal Postal Union (UPU) Extraordinary Congress in Riyadh despite Mnangagwa's orders.

The congress was hosted between October 1 and 5.

Reports indicate Chirume is yet to return despite Mavetera having reported back.

Sources told this publication Mnangagwa had made it explicitly clear no Permanent Secretary will be allowed to travel with their respective Minister as doing so would stall operations of Ministries.

"No Minister and Permanent Secretary can both be out of the country at the same time, as this has negative implications on service delivery and general Government business," Mnangagwa said at his first Cabinet meeting.

"Travel outside the country will be strictly limited to those programmes which are of strategic importance and contribute to our country's national priorities."

Barring Ministers from travelling to foreign countries with their Permanent Secretaries is said to be another one of Mnangagwa's attempts at reducing state expenditure.

Bloated entourages have been synonymous with Zimbabwe over the years.

USA: Global Village Museum to host presentation by Beks Ndlovu, founder of African Bush Camps

By Tamara Markard
tmarkard@greeleytribune.com
Greeley Tribune


Beks Ndlovu

THE Global Village Museum of Arts and Cultures is hosting a presentation by Beks Ndlovu, founder of African Bush Camps at Mountain Avenue in Fort Collins, Colorado, USA on October 18.

Ndlovu founded African Bush Camps, ABC, in 2006. ABC operates 17 luxury safari camps in Zimbabwe, Botswana and Zambia.

In addition to offering beautiful properties and incredible wildlife encounters, ABC focuses on sustainability, top guiding and authentic services.

ABC's sister company, the African Bush Camps Foundation, strives to support conservation, education and community empowerment on a local level.

Ndlovu, who was born and raised in Zimbabwe, was inspired to become a professional safari guide after being raised around wildlife.

ABC combines Ndlovu's passion for tourism and conservation with the goal of providing authentic safari experiences that uplifts local communities and protects wild spaces.

The museum's gift shop will have items from the African Bush Camps Foundation as well as other items from the continent of Africa, like wallets, jewelry and baskets, for purchase.

One attendee will also have the opportunity to receive a two-night stay for two travelers at any ABC Expedition Camp. The trip will include accommodations, food, drinks, shared game viewing and conservation fees.

The presentation is part of the museum's Global Adventures monthly gathering, which is designed for people who love to travel, dream of traveling and enjoy sharing their stories.

Daniel and Alice Owen host the program. The Owens have lived and worked abroad for 32 years and have visited 85 countries to date.

Registration for the event is $10 per person and all ages are welcome to attend.

Wine and refreshments will be served and there will be time for socializing and meeting other travelers. People do not need to be a museum member to attend the event.


Scene from ABC's Lolebezi Lodge. (Courtesy/Global Village Museum)



The Global Village Museum of Arts and Cultures actively works to support the celebration and preservation of world arts and cultures. (Courtesy/Global Village Museum)

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New Zimbabwe | BUSINESS

Zim entrepreneur braves multiple obstacles to build food company

How Lesly Marange, founder and CEO of Zimbabwe-based Glytime Foods, started and grew a food company amid numerous economic and operational challenges.

By Jaco Maritz
howwemadeitinafrica.com

IN 2018, Lesly Marange had a lot on his plate. In addition to dealing with the typical hurdles of launching a business, he was also getting ready for the birth of his first child.

And if balancing business and family wasn't already a tall order, he simultaneously enrolled in an MBA programme.

"I had an obligation to pay fees. I had an obligation to fund the family, [and] I had an obligation to run a business," he says. "When I reflect on it now, I actually ask myself, 'What was I thinking', but, you know, passion sometimes drives you to do crazy things," he says.

From prison camp to food company boss

Marange, now 34, grew up in a unique environment – a prison camp.

His father served as a prison officer, while his mother was a school teacher. From early on, Marange displayed a penchant for cooking.

Yet, in his community, a young boy spending time in the kitchen was frowned upon. His father, a war veteran, showed little enthusiasm for his son's culinary aspirations.

However, his mother advocated for the freedom to chase one's passions. Undeterred, Marange kept at it and even chose food and nutrition as a school subject.

He went on to study food science at Chinhoyi University of Technology. During this time, Marange found himself deeply engrossed in the success stories of prominent food enterprises, like Kellogg's and Nestlé.



Lesly Marange, founder and CEO of Glytime Foods

He took inspiration from the experiences of these company founders. "One of the biggest lessons that I learned is that there was a lot of endurance in their early days," Marange reflects. He didn't know then that he'd need the same kind of perseverance in his own food business journey.

While at university, Marange started a small business from his backyard, making roasted maize.

He sold it at prison, army, and police camps. Having grown up in a prison camp, he knew how these places worked, which gave him an advantage over other suppliers.

Roasted maize is a popular snack in Zimbabwe, but Marange did something unique: he pre-boiled the maize before roasting, which made it softer than what most people were used to.

"People liked it because it was different from the traditional way of doing things," he explains.

Although his maize product was well-received, the packaging was basic. He and his team of about eight part-time employees filled the unbranded packets with a cup and sealed them with a candle.

As part of his degree programme, Marange completed a one-year internship at a sugar factory in Harare.

One day, the boss visited and saw his roasted maize operation. Impressed, he suggested Marange consider the corporate world after his studies to learn how a large food business runs.

Marange took this advice to heart. After finishing his degree, he joined that same sugar factory. In just three-and-a-half years, he climbed the ranks and became the product development manager.

In this role, he developed several successful products that boosted the company's profits. This experience gave him confidence in his ability to make products with commercial value. So, feeling prepared, he left his job to start Glytime Foods in 2018.

Capitalising on a gap for healthy foods

While Marange worked at the sugar company, sales of table sugar started to drop dramatically as consumers became more health-conscious. Recognising health and wellness as an emerging trend, Marange saw an opportunity. His research revealed that not many Zimbabwean food brands were tapping into this market shift.

Glytime's first product was granola, which the company introduced at the end of 2018. Marange had saved up about US$2,000 from his previous job which funded the initial raw materials and packaging. He began making it in his own kitchen.

After preparing the family's meals each morning, the kitchen transformed into Glytime's production space for the remainder of the day. At first, the young company could only produce 24 units of granola cereal daily.

Food Lover's Market was the first grocery chain to stock Glytime's cereal. Their first order was for three cases, which took Glytime three days to produce. However, a subsequent, larger order of 15 cases posed a production hurdle. To cope, Marange initiated a night shift.

Meanwhile, the MBA programme at the National University of Science and Technology wasn't just aiding Marange in navigating business challenges. It also turned into an unexpected sales avenue.

He'd bring Glytime products to his classes and sell them to fellow students.

Rolling with the punches

Demand for the product continued to grow, and soon the supermarket chain TM Pick n Pay also started placing orders. In response, Marange upgraded to a new four-tray oven, which expanded Glytime's daily output from 8kg to 50kg.

The company also transitioned from Marange's home to its own dedicated facility.

But another challenge soon reared its head: inflation. Retailers paid Glytime long after the products were delivered, and by the time the money came in, inflation had eroded most of its profit.

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A selection of Glytime's granola products

Zim entrepreneur braves multiple obstacles to build food company...

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Despite ongoing orders, Glytime at one point in 2019 found itself with orders worth US$20,000 but without funds to purchase the needed raw materials. Additionally, its small oven couldn't keep up with the order volume, and there were six employees to pay.

Marange then discovered purchase order financing, a mechanism where businesses receive funds to fulfil existing orders. Old Mutual Finance agreed to provide US$20,000 of this financing, but needed some form of security. That's when Marange's uncle offered his property as collateral. "It was a risky move, but he agreed to it," the Glytime CEO explains. The interest rate of the loan was high, and Glytime had to pay back the entire amount within three months. "I had no option … I just had to stay in the game."

Yet, after obtaining the loan, more problems arose. Marange gave US$5,500 to an acquaintance to exchange for local currency. In a twist he hesitates to elaborate on, this person "lost" the money in the process, leaving Marange with just US$14,500 of the original US$20,000.

"I convened my team and said, 'You know what, we've been given money by the bank, and of that money we already lost US$5,500 and this money has to be repaid within three months … the only way we can manage this is to make sure that we work very hard to … keep this business alive."

The pep talk worked. Within three months, the team turned the US$14,500 into US$37,500. The loan, along with its interest, was repaid, costing about US$26,000 in total.

Glytime invested some of the remaining money to fabricate a much larger industrial oven which boosted its capacity five times.

Pandemic challenges to market momentum

Amid the challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic, the Zimbabwean economy took a hit, squeezing consumers. Even as Glytime's production ramped up, consumers tightened their belts.

This meant Glytime's products lingered on shelves, highlighting an issue: Glytime's preservative-free granola had a shelf life of just four months.

This posed significant challenges throughout 2021. Marange began experimenting with natural preservatives, and by April 2022 successfully reformulated the granola to have a longer shelf life.

Shoppers resumed buying, and before long, Glytime needed to again expand its production capacity, leading to the addition of two more industrial ovens.

Earlier this year, the company also secured an investor. This fresh capital is earmarked for a new factory with high-end equipment from Europe.

Beyond granola and roasted maize, Glytime's product range has expanded to 22 SKUs, including low-sugar cookies, rolled oats, raw honey, desiccated coconut, and a variety of plant-based vegetarian products like burger patties, sausages, and meatballs. In Zimbabwe, these products are stocked in about 120 stores, including Pick n Pay, Food Lover's Market, OK Mart, and Bon Marché.

One major hurdle for Glytime in Zimbabwe has been the inconsistent power supply. Marange notes that at one point, electricity issues meant the company could only operate at a third of its capacity. However, he says the power situation has improved recently.

Another issue Marange points out is with the workforce. He believes that many young Zimbabweans lack a strong work ethic, and there's a noticeable trend of young professionals leaving the country for better opportunities abroad.

Tapping independent agents and neighbouring markets for growth

Beyond brick-and-mortar retail outlets, Glytime has expanded its distribution by partnering with independent sales agents. Marange is keen on establishing the company's own sales channels and route to market.

These agents, mostly young people, actively market the company's products at educational institutions, hospitals, corporate settings, and various events. Right now, there are over 100 of these salespeople, and they make up around 12% of the company's total sales.

There are two ways these salespeople work with Glytime:

- Agents buy stock worth a minimum of US$50 at a reduced rate, then resell it at their chosen markup.
- For those lacking upfront capital, Glytime provides the stock. After reselling, the agents return the revenue to Glytime and earn a commission ranging from 10% to 12%, depending on their sales volume.

Glytime has leveraged its additional capacity to venture into neighbouring Zambia and Botswana. Its products can now be found in multiple supermarkets there, with exports comprising roughly 15% of the company's revenue. Marange aims to take advantage of the African Continental Free Trade Area to further expand the company's regional footprint.

New Zimbabwe | FEATURES

Child President holds an informative discussion on adolescents with UNICEF Zimbabwe Representative

By John Mokwetsi

NEVILLE Mavu, the Zimbabwe Child President, recently visited the UNICEF Representative Dr Tajudeen Oyewale to have a heart-to-heart discussion on young people and adolescents.



Mavu delved quickly into the issues: "What strategies are you employing to include children in development matters of our country as leaders of tomorrow?"

There was respect for the question as Dr. Oyewale settled into his chair. He acknowledges the importance of the inquiry and thanks the President for finding time to dialogue on the pertinent material of Adolescents.

"Maybe I should ask you first: I would want to ask you how you think UNICEF can do better in their work for the children of Zimbabwe," Dr Oyewale said.

Mavu paused and responded: "We thank UNICEF for the support you continue showing us in many areas, including the junior parliament and in education and health as well as Children Protection, Nutrition, and others. The support you give the government is highly commendable. However, we want UNICEF to do more in giving young people, especially adolescents, a voice."

Dr. Oyewale said education is very important to UNICEF and is the best investment we can make for children.

"We have started something around digital transformation in education. I believe learning is essential. I want to acknowledge that Zimbabwe has a robust education system," he said.

Turning to giving voices to adolescents, the UNICEF Representative spoke about the UNICEF Advisory Youth Committee launched last year in June.

"Let me use this opportunity to invite you to the Youth Advisory Committee so that we can continue to use your influence and voice to allow children to share their concerns with us. Collaborating with government and young people is critical for us, hence the Committee," Dr Oyewale said.

On the launch of the Committee last year, Dr Oyewale said the launch testimony of UNICEF Zimbabwe's commitment to the Global UNICEF strategy that focuses on meaningful participation of adolescents and young people in UNICEF programme planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation," Adam said.

Mavu continued to probe how UNICEF would help in line with the theme of the Junior Parliament of "The Right of the Child to the Digital Environment". He zoomed in on how children in rural areas are left out in the digital ecosystem built to allow better learning outcomes.

Dr Oyewale said: "We are working closely with the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education (MOPSE), Ministry of ICT, Potraz in the programmes around e-learning. We have a programme called the Learning Passport. On that platform, you have access to a lot of learning materials. More importantly, we have done two milestones around this learning platform in Zimbabwe.

"First, we work with MOPSE to have a digital laboratory or studio to provide learning digital content. The second one is that Learning Passport a full-time, real-time online platform. What that means is that without the internet, you cannot access the content."

"But, as UNICEF Zimbabwe and our partners, we are developing an offline version of the platform. This means that even if your school has no internet connection, you can access the learning and teaching material."

Originally designed to provide education for displaced and refugee children through a digital remote learning platform, the Learning Passport – a collaboration between UNICEF and Microsoft, is expanding to more countries and offers a country-level curriculum for children and youth.

Its launch in Zimbabwe came at a crucial time when over 4.6 million learners in Zimbabwe had been out of school for extended periods due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The then Minister of Primary and Secondary Education, Minister Cain Mathema, said on its launch in April 2021. "The Learning Passport has arrived when the Government has launched its National Development Strategy 1 (NDS1), which focuses on initiatives around inclusive education as well as innovative technologies that support alternative learning approaches from Early Childhood Development upward."

The Representative emphasised that digital must be understood in the context of other formats, like using USBs to collect audio files that can be used on other devices. He also spoke of radio lessons.

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Reaching out to Africa's deaf

What churches are doing to better communicate

By Cyril Zenda | Religion Unplugged

EVER SINCE Juliet Ndlovu discovered that her daughter Nozipo was deaf just over a decade ago, she has taken her from one church to another.

Initially, she did so in search of miracle healing, but later — as she reconciled herself to the reality that her daughter could be deaf for life — her concern turned to Nozipo's spiritual well-being.

"Nozipo's spiritual life is something that has worried me a lot," said Ndlovu, 38, when talking about her 14-year-old daughter. "Although I have been to many churches with her, I really can't say it has been beneficial to her in any way because none of these churches have sign language interpreters, let alone sign language pastors … most of the things she knows (about Jesus Christ) are from her school and what she learns online."

Because of this, when Ndlovu heard about the Rev. Mary Chipoka-Zenda, Zimbabwe's first deaf pastor, she was elated.

"It's not just about my daughter but about the hundreds of thousands of others like her, who have been deprived of an opportunity to make conscious choices of their on," Ndlovu said.

Nozipo is just but one of the nearly 300,000 deaf people in Zimbabwe who have largely been excluded from receiving the Gospel of Jesus Christ because worship in local churches is conducted in spoken language to the exclusion of the deaf. The southern African nation has about 1.5 million people who suffer various degrees of hearing problems, and of these, about 300,000 are fully deaf. With only 73,000 of them having access to passable sign language, most members of this community have been condemned to a forlorn existence in conditions of both physical and social isolation.

The deaf finally remembered

This, however, is set to change as churches in Zimbabwe have started taking steps to embrace this unreached community that has existed on the margins for a very long time. One after another, some mainline churches in the country have started accommodating the deaf during services, starting to deploy sign language interpreters to translate sermons.



Sign language interpreter Spiwe Mhere...Credit United Methodist News

Others, like the Hilltop United Methodist Church in the eastern city of Mutare, have brought together more than 60 deaf people and as many as 15 professional sign language interpreters. The Reformed Church in Zimbabwe in the city of Masvingo, which runs the oldest school of the deaf, is where Chipoka-Zenda, who was trained in South Africa, ministers.

The Rev. Wilfred Dimingu, the general secretary of the Zimbabwe Council of Churches, told Religion Unplugged the council is on the cusp of establishing the country's first deaf church where everything will be done almost exclusively in sign language.

"Until now, some churches have been having Sign Language interpreters to cater for the deaf, but this has not been enough," he said. "After engaging the deaf community, they made it clear that what they want is a church of their own. … They insist on it being called the Deaf Church, and we are working with the Bible Society to ensure that there is a sign language Bible and other literature because everything will have to be in sign language."

The the Zimbabwe Council of Churches is implementing recommendations of the World Council of Churches' Ecumenical Disability Advocates Network, which calls for churches to embrace people with disabilities and facilitate their leadership. The move further stems from the ZCC's Zimbabwe Disability Inclusion Survey, an accessibility assessment survey carried out in 2021 to determine the accessibility of churches to those living with disabilities.

Dimingu said this church for the deaf is set to be open before the end of this year.

"We will start with one Deaf Church in Harare, then we will ask where the community want the next church to be," he said.

In a statement posted on its websites, the Zimbabwe Bible Society, added, "The purpose of this Sign Language Bible project is to bring the Word of God to the Deaf Community in Zimbabwe in the language they understand so that they understand the Word of God using their preferred language."

Little done to accommodate

Kimion Tagwirei, a theological academic at South Africa's North-West University, said that while the deaf have largely been ignored in most churches, some Christian denominations started making initiatives to accommodate this community some years ago.

"Some denominations like RCZ (Reformed Church in Zimbabwe) and Anglicans have established ministries that serve and empower the deaf to minister to each other holistically, beyond mere proclamation to demonstration of the gospel," Tagwirei said. "However, the majority of churches, as well as ecumenical bodies like EFZ (Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe) and ZCC have not done much to accommodate the deaf, mainly because of lacking cultural inclusivity."

He listed the reasons for this situation as follow:

— Lack of capacity since most church leaders have not learned sign language.
— Cultural gaps since the church has not studied the culture of the deaf.
— A lack of inclusivity.

"My research on the deaf reveals that the deaf can only feel and be accommodated in the hearing church when some of the deaf are involved in the leadership and liturgy of the church," Tagwirei said. "Excluding them is a statement to them that they are not taken as normal as others. The deaf do not want to be pitied. It's not abnormal to be deaf! It's just being different and using a different language. Thus, the same way the hearing church uses English, Shona and Ndebele for example, she should also use sign language in church to accommodate the deaf."

Reaching out to 40 million people

The neglect of the deaf in a liturgical context is a continent-wide phenomenon. Most African churches are guilty of neglecting the continent's 40 million deaf men, women and children as their services are conduced through spoken languages to the exclusion of this community.

According to the World Federation of the Deaf, there are more than 70 million deaf people worldwide. A World Health Organization 2021 report says about 40 million of these people are found in Africa. September was Deaf Awareness Month. Sept. 23 is set aside for International Days of Sign Languages. This year's day was celebrated under the theme "A World Where Deaf People Everywhere Can Sign Anywhere!"

This year's day came shortly after South Africa had upgraded sign language to be the country's 12th official language. It became the fourth African nation to do so, following Kenya, Uganda and Zimbabwe.

In Kenya, where up to 2.7 million people are deaf, sign language is the East African country's third official language, after English and Swahili. Efforts are being made to ensure that the deaf are accommodated in the church.

Ghana National Association of the Deaf executive director Juventus Duorinaah told Religion Unplugged that while sign language is widely available, only a small number of people use it.

"In recent years, religious bodies and private institutions have also developed interest in sign language and are teaching their congregations and students sign language," Duorinaah said. "The government has also made considerable effort in promoting GhSL (Ghana Sign Language) by recognizing sign language interpreters in certain institutions and has mandated and (incorporated) sign language in the curriculum of some tertiary institutions as a compulsory course."

This past June, the Botswana Bible Society embarked on an ambitious project that will see the country having its first sign language Bible by 2027.

South Africa has been the most progressive country in terms of giving an ear to the deaf, with 43 schools and one tertiary institution available to serve 4 million deaf people. They have trained more than 600,000 people to communicate using sign language.

Tagwirei said sign language is rarely used in preaching, and interpreters are not usually engaged in ecclesiastic communication. Most deaf people are born into hearing families who sometimes take them to church — but only 10% of families in Africa (23% in the United States) learn enough sign language to communicate effectively with loved ones.

"The church," Tagwirei said, "should realize that if it cannot use sign language and expects deaf people to speak orally, the church itself is disabled and unable to communicate the gospel with deaf people."

Cyril Zenda is a Christian and an African journalist and writer based in Harare, Zimbabwe.

New Zimbabwe | EDITORIAL

Zimbabwe: The political economy of authoritarianism

The hyperinflation that was the hallmark of Robert Mugabe's twilight years is back and wreaking havoc even as the central bank and the ministry of finance continue to deny the collapse of the local currency.

By Tinashe L. Chimedza

THE general picture that emerged on the 23rd of August 2023 was very simple: in urban areas that have traditionally voted for the opposition, polling stations delayed in opening, voters had to sleep in queues, ward borders had been tortured to accommodate gerrymandering, and ballot papers were missing.

In the rural areas, the story was different. Voting materials arrived on time, voting went on "smoothly", but not without the menacing presence of a ruling party-deployed semi-militia group called Forever Associates of Zimbabwe (FAZ) outside polling stations and an alarming number of voters who claimed "illiteracy".

It is this organisation – that were claiming to do "polling surveys" – that the SADC Observer Mission identified as the "shadowy organisation" outside polling stations.

This trajectory of coercion and irregularities had been afoot in the pre-election season. For the past five consecutive elections, and more (2005, 2008, 2012, 2018), and now the August 2023 general election, the opposition has struggled to get an updated voters roll that they can audit or use for planning voter mobilisation.

In each of these elections, the opposition has had to seek the intervention of the courts, and this has been described by some as "lawfare", a scenario where justice institutions are deliberately captured to obfuscate the electoral process and keep the opposition lawyers busy.

The current military-backed party-state elite have gone further to make democracy very expensive, the cost of being a candidate has gone up (US$20,000 for president and US$1,000 for members of parliament).

The political landscape in Zimbabwe has barely changed and the ruling party is back to its default settings – combining law and coercion to try and subdue the opposition.

The SADC Observer Mission made some scathing remarks just after the election: In conclusion, the Mission observed that the pre-election and voting phases, on 23–24 August 2023 Harmonised Elections were peaceful and calm.

However, for reasons outlined above, the Mission noted that some aspects of the Harmonised Elections, fell short of the requirements of the Constitution of Zimbabwe, the Electoral Act, and the SADC Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections (emphasis mine). Before making this bold conclusion, the Observer Mission noted a litany of irregularities ranging from access to the voters roll, delimitation, freedom of assembly and expression, independence of the judiciary, nomination fees, biased state media coverage, voter materials and participation of women.

In an interview on Newzroom Afrika, Dr Nevers Mumba, the head of the Observer Mission, went further to say, "Our goal is to authenticate the process and if the process is flawed the result cannot be legitimate."

But even long before the election, the region had mandated the former president of Mozambique, Joaquim Chissano, to be in Zimbabwe as an "elder", most likely to cool down the polarisation. President Chissano visited Zimbabwe as part of "debt negotiations" but when one looks closer, there was some shuttling going on beyond the "debt".

This is to be found in Dr Adesina's statement on Zimbabwe, saying, "We have institutionalised a platform for regular, constructive, and open dialogue that is key for trust and confidence building among all stakeholders," adding that the issues to be addressed included "governance, rule of law, human rights, freedom of speech, political level playing field, electoral reforms that will assure free and fair elections".

Currency Fluctuations, Hyperinflation, and 'Gold Mafia' Somewhere, in history, a writer intelligently warned that "history does not repeat, but rhymes" and nowhere is this more evident than in the incessant economic and currency meltdowns in Zimbabwe.

In the twilight of the collapse of the Zimbabwe dollar under Robert Mugabe, the central bank, was printing money to fund government and hyperinflation became the stuff of legend.

On Amazon and other platforms, the $ZW is still an object of ridicule and a collector's item, one can still buy a $ZW 1 trillion note. That hyperinflation is back again and wreaking havoc, and true to form, the military-nationalists are blaming "sanctions" and "saboteurs" in equal measure and their solution has been a raft of Bills and Acts to legislate "patriotism".

Professor Steve Hanke, who tracks Zimbabwe's hyperinflation, has estimated it as the highest in the world, at a whopping 685 per cent, having

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ABOUT US

Destiny Media Group (DMG) is a diversified information and events management business involved in the creation and distribution of world class and multi-genre content across all platforms from news and current affairs, to entertainment and sport.
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Zimbabwe: The political economy of authoritarianism...

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topped 1332 per cent in March 2023. On the 24th of May 2023, former Finance Minister and opposition stalwart Tendai Biti had this to say about the currency collapse: Only 2 weeks ago the rate was US$1 to ZW$1,000. US$1,000 was a flat ZW$1 million. Now the rate is at US$1 to ZW$4,000. This means in a mere ten days working people and pensioners have lost 400% of their wages and pensions.

Truth is the kakistocracy has failed and failed in absolute terms –. These currency fluctuations are bad news for business, but worse news keeps rolling in. The Minister of Finance has had to use presidential powers to issue statutory instruments forcing business and service providers to only use the "foreign exchange rate that is prevailing at the RBA-controlled auction rate".

This rate is an artificial rate, not linked to the market demand for foreign currency. Zimbabwe becomes a puzzle; for example, it has one of the biggest sources of remittances – US$1.8 billion plus and rising per year – and yet the currency continues to collapse. Part of the explanation is to be found in the collapse of trust in the local currency and the unwillingness of citizens to trust banks in Zimbabwe.

This explains the billions of US$ circulating informally outside the finance system and being kept securely "mattress and pillow" bank. Somewhere, in history, a writer intelligently warned that "history does not repeat, but rhymes".

While the central bank and the ministry of finance continue to deny the collapse of the local currency and to push it as "legal tender", the effect of the income collapse is especially bad for government employees. In a video circulating on social media, nurses and nurse educators say that they are receiving their pay in the $ZW equivalent yet most shops are now demanding to be paid in US$.

One member of parliament has taken a private school to court to force it to accept payment in $ZW; the consequences would be dire. If schools accept the collapsed $ZW, then they cannot pay services providers. Boarding schools would have to shut down.

Some elites are somehow insulated; in the now infamous Gold Mafia scandal, it became clear that political elites are transacting in US$ and only switch to the local currency when there is advantage. But it gets worse – some of the businesspeople that have access to the auction system can get foreign currency from the Central Bank at heavily discounted rates and still sell their goods, fuel for example, in US$.

The flamboyance and arrogance of the well connected are plain to see; first-class flights, holidays in exotic locations, and imported luxury cars (Rolls Royces, Lamborghinis, and the latest Mercedes Benz models).

They live in a parallel universe. Under the late president Robert Mugabe, patronage networks started flourishing in exchange for supporting his presidency and the level of grand-scale looting of Zimbabwe's natural resources accelerated.

Here a tender worth millions for a solar farm is funded and undelivered, another tender to supply medicines is overinflated into millions; there a tender for cars is overinflated and on and on it goes.

The state has become a willing and easy fishing pool for the party-state elites. Recent divorce proceedings involving the former president's daughter exposed the level of elite privilege, with more than 21 farms becoming part of the proceedings (over 21,000 ha – the size of Monaco).

Other ministers and members of parliament and connected elites have amassed prime land holdings by simply writing letters to the city council and grabbing land then subdividing it and selling it. Post-

Election, Future Trajectories and Extractive Party-Army Elite

The ruling party elite pull influential strings within the political economy.

They control a large swathe of potential voters through land even threatening to dispossess land from land reform beneficiaries. In small-scale mining they have cemented control of sometimes violent "small-scale miners" but the "comrades" are also in business in the diamond, gold, coal, iron ore sectors and have extensive land holdings in urban areas. Lawyer and long-time activist,

Siphosami Malunga commented that: There's a political economy to authoritarianism. There's nothing like seeking power for power's sake. Authoritarianism is not just about accumulating ALL power. It is about accumulating ALL power so you can unaccountably use it to enrich yourself endlessly. It's always the money (Twitter, 29/08/2023).

The "comrades in business" are now fighting back because a political transition will make them orphans of the state and its apparatus of patronage and racketeering.

The liberation generation, older and sometimes fractured, has started fighting back calling, the observer reports 'advisory' and 'non-binding' and the ZANU PF spokesperson accusing Zambia, of being a "neo-colonial" front posing a threat to all liberation movements in Southern Africa (especially South Africa, Mozambique, Namibia and even Tanzania).

For its part, the opposition has heightened its demands, announcing that they "reject the election in toto" meaning that even the parliamentary, senatorial and council opposition will potentially not take up the positions.

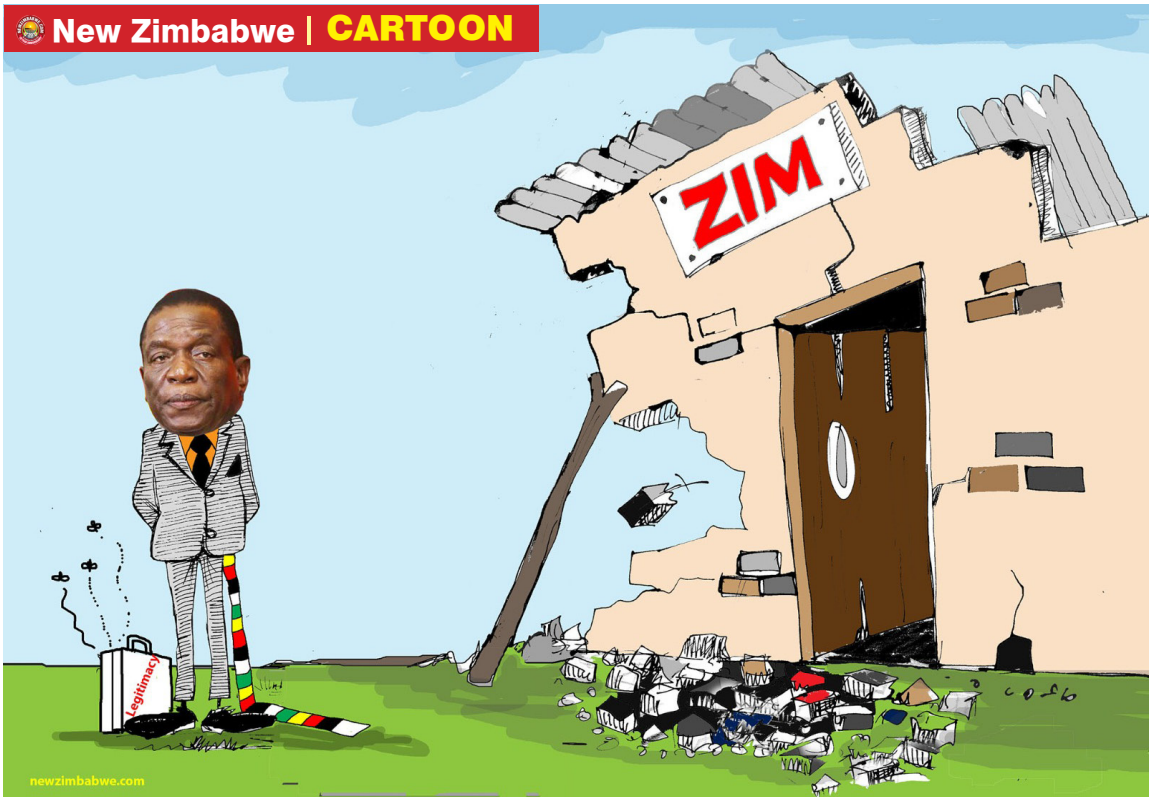
The diplomatic shuttles to Zimbabwe's capital have already ensued, with the announcement that the former president of Tanzania, Jakayo Kikwete, will lead a mission to cool down the tempers. The opposition will have to contend with a regional leadership of liberation movements that are easily swayed by ZANU PF and within the region it is an open secret that Harare's leaders have actively supported and funded networks of leaders in the region making them beholden to their patronage.

The ruling elite propaganda has borrowed the Mugabe rhetoric and the deputy secretary to the president has already started playing back the clips of Robert Mugabe threatening the whole region and telling them to go hang. Whether the region will buy this bravado and allow the "comrades" in Harare to entrench illegitimacy remains to be seen.

The flamboyance and arrogance of the well-connected is plain to see. Zimbabwe has entered another cycle of contested electoral outcomes and a herculean polarised political contest between the ruling party and the opposition is in the offing.

The trajectory is not looking good for the liberation generation. As they get older, lose regional allies, and become fractured, a demographic shift is eroding their hold on power, but their dispatch from state power, long started by Morgan Tsvangirai, will be convulsive and torturous and it seems the only way out is a negotiated political settlement to ease them into retirement. Within these murky waters opposition leader Nelson Chamisa finds himself in at the deep end.

Tinashe L. Chimedza is an Associate Director at the Institute of Public Affairs in Zimbabwe. This article was initially published on The Elephant (https://www.theelephant.info/, a platform for engaging citizens to reflect, re-member and re-envision their society by interrogating the past, the present, to fashion a future.



New Zimbabwe
ARTS | CULTURE
ENTERTAINMENT

Now we can come!

- Fans say after Castle Lager Braai Festival announces return of dancehall giant Winky D



Winky D

By Leopold Munhende
Chief Correspondent

ZIMBABWEANS are happy and social media is ablaze!

Winky D, the Gaffa President's fans have welcomed Castle Lager's Friday announcement that he will be performing at its premier outing, the Braai Festival on October 21.

The Dancehall giant missed his usual Castle Tankard stage under unclear circumstances with some pointing out his hard-hitting Eureka Eureka album had rattled furthers in government and ruling Zanu PF.

Songs such as Ibotso, Tears and Dzimba Dzemabwe which questioned the manner in which Zimbabwe was being governed rendered him State Enemy Number One.

Winky D's music was barred from State-run Radio and Television stations with his name omitted numerous times to the chagrin of his fans.

He also did not feature at OK Zimbabwe's Grand Challenge, raising worry he was being deliberately shut out.

"Now we can come. Last year we boycotted that nonsense tikaenda ku (and went to) Kingfisher," said Annywedge Tsumba on X, formerly Twitter.

In less than two hours, Castle Lager's announcement had passed 11,000 impressions and registered hundreds of re-tweets. Facebook was no different, over a thousand had watched his promo.

Winky D is arguably Zimbabwe's most popular artist, having upturned international artists such as King Shango, Busy Signal, Patoranking, Mafikizolo, and recently Makhadzi at a UK show.

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Renowned Zim author Tsitsi Dangarembga receives Africa Freedom Prize



Zimbabwean author Tsitsi Dangarembga (L) was awarded the Africa Freedom Prize at the Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom awards in Johannesburg, South Africa

By Kate Bartlett

JOHANNESBURG — Zimbabwean author Tsitsi Dangarembga received the Africa Freedom Prize in Johannesburg on Thursday, which is awarded to individuals who "have shown remarkable courage and dedication to advancing the cause of freedom, democracy and human rights on the African continent."

Dangarembga has long been one of Zimbabwe's most highly regarded and beloved fiction writers — from her lauded first novel "Nervous Conditions" in 1988 to "This Mournable Body," which was shortlisted for the Booker Prize in 2020.

Tinashe Mushakavanhu, a research fellow at the University of Oxford who specializes in Zimbabwean literature, said Dangarembga has a place in the modern canon.

"Her most important contribution is being the first Black, Zimbabwean woman writer to publish a novel in English. In that sense, she is a pioneer and a leading light, so much that her book, "Nervous Conditions," is considered one of the best African books of the 20th century," said Mushakavanhu.

That's one of the reasons the Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom, which promotes liberal politics and democracy around the world, is awarding Dangarembga their greatest honor today. She is also the recipient of the 2021 PEN International Award for Freedom of Expression.

Aside from her writing, Dangarembga has made headlines for her political activism. The 64-year-old was convicted by a Zimbabwean court last year of "inciting violence" after staging a peaceful protest with a friend during which the two women stood quietly on a roadside holding placards calling for political reform. That conviction was overturned earlier this year by a higher court.

So, would Dangarembga consider herself a political writer?

"I don't conceive of myself as an activist writer. I conceive of myself as a person who has a story to tell, and my story has an intention. My intention is to tell stories in which Zimbabweans can see themselves reflected. And I think that is important for the well-being of the individual — to understand the complexities of the lives they are living and the challenges, and to possibly point to possible solutions. And I think when individuals are able to engage in that process, it leads to the health of the nation," she said.

After independence in 1980, the former British colony was ruled by one man, Robert Mugabe, for almost four decades until he was overthrown in a bloodless coup in 2017.

His successor from the same party, President Emmerson Mnangagwa, has failed to fix the country's broken economy and has cracked down on dissent.

The political opposition called the last elections, held in August, a fraud, and the Southern African Development Community, which sent a mission to observe polls, expressed concerns over the fairness of the vote.

Among the previous winners of the Africa Freedom Prize are Nigerian novelist Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie.

Danai Mupotsa, a senior lecturer in African literature at Johannesburg's Witwatersrand University, notes that female writers from the continent have been receiving more attention and accolades lately.

"There's definitely a particular kind of moment for African writers and African women writers, I think, in particularly the last 10 years," said Mupotsa.

Asked about this, Dangarembga said what it indicates is the publishing world has "'shifted to open up" and is publishing more work by African woman writers.

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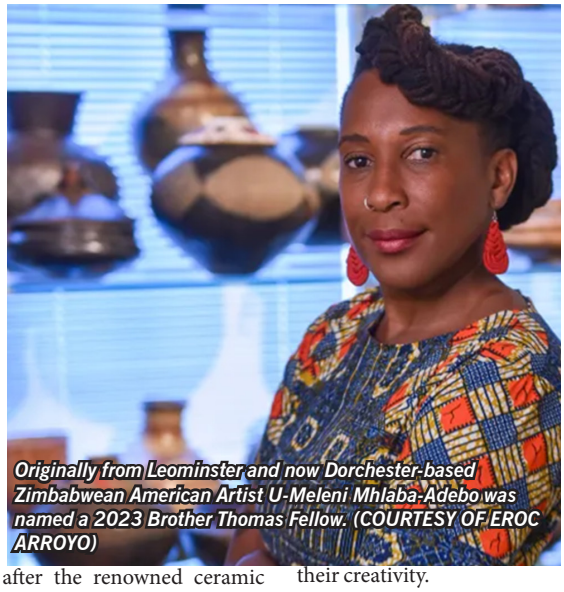
US-based Zimbabwean poet, musician, artist among distinguished recipients of prestigious fellowship

By Cheryl A. Cuddahy
Sentinel & Enterprise

LEOMINSTER native, and Dorchester-based artist and poet U-Meleni Mhlaba-Adebo has been honored as one of the distinguished recipients of the 2023 Brother Thomas Fellowship.

Mhlaba-Adebo's remarkable talents and contributions to the world of art have earned her this prestigious honor, which recognizes her outstanding artistic achievements and her deep commitment to the community.

The Brother Thomas Fellowship, administered by the Boston Foundation, is a highly sought-after accolade that celebrates exceptional artists for their significant impact on the arts and their dedication to creating meaningful change. Named after the renowned ceramic artist Brother Thomas Bezanson, this fellowship empowers artists to continue pushing the boundaries of their creativity.



Originally from Leominster and now Dorchester-based Zimbabwean American Artist U-Meleni Mhlaba-Adebo was named a 2023 Brother Thomas Fellow. (COURTESY OF EROC ARROYO)

Mhlaba-Adebo is a multifaceted artist known for her profound exploration of culture, identity, and social justice through various artistic mediums. Her work spans visual arts, spoken word, and music, and she has consistently used her art as a catalyst for initiating critical conversations and inspiring social change.

"I am honored to be one of the 2023 Brother Thomas Fellows," said Mhlaba-Adebo. "I am so grateful to the beautiful soul that put my name forward with a belief in my work."

"Thank you The Boston Foundation, Lee Pelton, Catherine T. Morris, the jurors, and Brother Thomas and the Pucker Gallery for the incredible support,:" she added. "This fellowship will allow me time to think, research, learn, experiment ,create and collaborate on a new level as I delve deeper into my creative practice with an eye to social impact here and in Zimbabwe."

In addition to her remarkable achievements as a Brother Thomas Fellow, Mhlaba-Adebo captivated audiences as the featured poet at the historic Grolier Poetry Bookshop, renowned as the world's oldest poetry bookstore on Thursday.

The event provided a unique opportunity for attendees to witness her lyrical brilliance in a cherished literary landmark.

The Grolier Poetry Bookshop event offered both an in-person and virtual option, ensuring that audiences from around the world got a chance to experience Mhlaba-Adebo's captivating poetry and the rich literary tradition of the Grolier Poetry Bookshop.

POLAND: Zimbabwean single mother of two defies odds to work as truck driver in Europe

By VOA

A 29-YEAR-OLD woman from Zimbabwe is a social media sensation after making a name for herself as one of Europe's top truck drivers. The achievement is one for the books for Sikhanyisiwe Tazvitya, who was once a maid in Zimbabwe's capital, Harare.

Popularly known as @Laydytruckerzim, Sikhanyisiwe Tazvitya, is a proud trucker in Warsaw, Poland, where she now lives and works. With over 100,000 Facebook followers, the former maid turned earthmoving equipment operator, says she is proud of her achievement.

"I started as a maid in Harare and then I decided to upgrade myself to Earthmoving Equipment Operator, but it was not easy because my salary was very little but through dedication and asking for help from my family and that's when my life changed. Now I am a truck driver.", she said.



Sikhanyisiwe Tazvitya

Tazvitya says that she didn't want to settle as an earthmoving equipment operator and decided to pursue a training course in the male-dominated field of driving. "The Earthmoving job did not stop me from wanting more, I did it all and still saved up for Truck Driving Training, and here we are today, doing what most men are failing to do. This is my story and now I live in Poland."

To many men and women who have followed her journey, Tazvitya has been an inspiration. Fellow Zimbabwean, Hope Magara of the Midlands, who also now lives in Poland, says she is now a trucker thanks to Tazvitya. She said, "Sikhanyisiwe was my first driver, trainer and mentor, now I am here in Poland working, she is very kind and a blessing. It is doable. To other women out there, If I can do it, so can you. Never give up".

Fellow Zimbabwean Zamani Dhlodhlo, is already working as a truck driver in South Africa, but is planning to join Tazvitya in Poland. Through her @ LadytruckerZim Facebook page, Tazvitya has been helping many like Dhlodhlo process documents to work abroad. Mr Dhlodhlo said, "I am a truck driver in South Africa, I have already completed my application process. I have my work permit ready, I am just waiting on my visa and I will be off to Poland. Many companies in Europe have no idea how much of a treasure Tazvitya is because as she helps us, she is also helping them with their labor needs."

As a single mother of two children, Tazvitya says she wants to see more women succeed in anything they pursue by staying true to their dreams. "Believe in yourself, take calculated risks, work hard, take care of yourself, stay true to yourself and ignore negativity. Surround yourself with people who are supportive of your goals. Stay hungry, fight harder and never give up. We can do this, and don't forget to pray."

For now, Tazvitya has no plans to leave the trucking business anytime soon and hopes to continue inspiring others.



Cricket World Cup 2023:

Zim's 'forgotten man' Henry Olonga felt 'hated' for black armband protest

By Kevin Hand
BBC Sport Africa

ZIMBABWE'S first black cricketer, Henry Olonga, says he has felt "hated" for 20 years following his black armband protest against his country's then-president, Robert Mugabe.

Olonga and team-mate Andy Flower made the stand against "the death of democracy" in their country at the jointly-hosted 2003 World Cup in South Africa and Kenya.

The pair have lived in exile ever since, while Mugabe remained in power until 2017.

Flower would go on to coach England to successive Ashes triumphs.

A different path awaited Olonga with an appearance on TV talent show The Voice in 2019, where he was coached by Destiny's Child star Kelly Rowland, bringing him back to his first love - singing.

A journey that began by escaping Zimbabwe under a blanket, however, has taken its toll.

"I'm a forgotten person as far as the world of cricket goes," Olonga told BBC Sport Africa.

"With each passing decade, it might grow in significance. The closer to death people get, the more they're celebrated, I suppose. When they pass it's 'they're amazing - he was such a brave man'.


Henry Olonga and Andy Flower donned black armbands at the 2002 Cricket World Cup to protest against the Robert Mugabe regime in Zimbabwe

"For the first 20 years - or 17, anyway, until Mugabe died - I felt like the most hated man in Zimbabwe."

'I was my own man'

By the end of the competition in 2003, Olonga - only 26 at the time - joined the then 34-year-old Flower in announcing his retirement from international cricket.

"I'd been called all sorts of names - and that's what I had to continue to face for the first decade after I did the protest," Olonga recalled.

"People thought I wasn't smart enough to wake up by myself: 'Oh, Andy Flower bullied me into it all'.

"People were very unkind. They didn't understand the depth of thought that I put into doing the protest.

"I was my own man.

"I'm a man of religious conviction so my faith played a part, but so did my growing political awakening. I met politicians who told me what it was really like to be in opposition to Mugabe.

"We had three or four years since the farm invasions began and were dealing with a foreign press constantly asking us whether we should have sanctions imposed on us, because of the human rights violations back at home and the crumbling rule of law.

"So there was a lot of food for thought and I had to digest a lot. Once I assimilated it, I decided that was it."

Olonga says the legacy of his actions still haunt him now: "I've done a lot of gigs where Zimbabweans have been there. And they sometimes say very unkind things.

"My interactions with people are either bitter or sweet. It's very rarely in the middle and a lot of people believe politics and sport shouldn't mix.

"I'm hyper-sensitive around cricket. Some people - especially cricket-loving Zimbabweans - think I started the rotten Zimbabwe.

"A lot of people say, 'it all fell apart when Olonga and Flower did that'.

"Within a year or so in 2004, a lot of white players got kicked out or sacked and Zimbabwe cricket hasn't fully recovered.

"I'm not suggesting in any way I shoulder responsibility over that.

"The truth of the matter is, Australia's my home. It's the country I will die in if I ever was given the choice. I don't see myself going back to Zimbabwe to live.

"If they invite me back for the 50-year anniversary of the black armband protests, because a more liberal and democratic party is in charge, maybe I'll go. I don't know."

An exile's journey from England to Australia

Mugabe, who died in 2019, was replaced as president by Emmerson Mnangagwa after a coup in 2017.

Zimbabwe remains in political turmoil now, with opposition leaders alleging August's elections, which handed Mnangagwa a second term, were rigged.

Olonga, now 47, began his exile in England before moving to Australia seven years ago.

"My dad is still there [in Zimbabwe] - he is in his mid-80s, and I don't know if I'll see him again," Olonga said. "My brother lives there but video calls are not the same as meeting them in person.

"I lost not only my career, but my home. I lost a fiancé in the process. In the eyes of a lot of Zimbabweans, I lost any sense of respectability because for the next decade I was persona non grata and judged to the hilt.

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Zimbabwe's 'forgotten man' Henry Olonga felt 'hated' for black armband protest

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"It's only now with the passage of time people have moved on. Mugabe is dead. Mnangagwa, Mugabe's second in charge, is now in power and I think people have been through a few cycles of hyperinflation and suffering and pain.

"Now they're saying: 'maybe we have been fooled, maybe these guys had a point 20 years ago and we should have paid attention.'

"People are softening and are at least seeing that I had a point or that I should have had the right to have a point because there's a lot of noise being made about Zimbabwe being a democracy.

"I have been consistent in my condemnation of what has happened and still continues to happen in Zimbabwe."

Olonga, who at 18 was also his country's youngest player, still holds the record bowling figures for a Zimbabwean in a one-day international when he claimed 6-19 against England in 1999.

Three wickets in the three-run victory against India followed at the 1999 World Cup.

With the move to Australia, his other burning passion continued and he sung with the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra before being brought fully back into the media spotlight.

"The Voice was quite the experience," he recalls. "I did a gig with the police band at the local Adelaide Town Hall.

"Someone made a comment, a review or a video, and somehow this worked its way into the hands of the scouts at The Voice.

"One of the most harrowing experiences I had was doing the live audition. I was easily the oldest person, by about 20 years, surrounded by teenagers - I was probably the only black person in the room as well - you can imagine the trepidation.

"It was a great experience. It really was. I chose Kelly Rowland as my coach. Being in that bubble was quite surreal.

"It was quite sobering for me because I've come a long way. I used to play cricket in Zimbabwe, I then did my thing and then ended up on a world stage, to show the world that I could 'attempt' to sing.

"I would have liked to go further," he said, having fallen just short of the final. "But it was also a great privilege to be on the show.

"It's taken me nearly 20 years to get my foot in the door. It's a major segue, and being totally honest, I'm sort of a struggling, broke musician.

"After Covid, I found myself unemployed for a couple of years, and struggling to get bookings and gigs. Now I don't just sing, I tell my story as well. I do public speaking, I think that's my main source of income, to be honest."

On The Voice, Olonga sang a rendition of Anthony Warlow's hit 'This is the Moment' while his renditions of Nessum Dorma were among the songs that grabbed attention before and after his appearance on the show.

Indeed, he conceded, when challenged on being a 'broke' musician, that his pursuit of a music career may only just be beginning given a tenor's or baritone's voices only mature in their forties.

"I can carry on singing until I can't anymore and that's what I fully intend to do. I love my music. I love performing - I think I'm just coming into my own in the sense that my voice is reaching maturity now.

"I can forge a new path, and not really focus on whether I'm remembered or forgotten as much in the world of cricket."

Whether Olonga's second career leads to international success in the same way his cricket career did remains to be seen but it has come as a comfort to a man, who has already fought a battle few will ever face.

"It would be a sweeter second career," he said. "When I played cricket, I had lots of ups and downs. The political protest cost me my career, I got death threats and had to flee.

"All of that left a wound in me.

"Cricket was a messy divorce. Far from being celebrated at the end - being given a guard of honour - I was told I couldn't be on the bus with the rest of the team, had death threats, went into hiding and then was vilified by my fellow countrymen - people I was trying to help.

"Cricket has been a weird one for me - it was a source of pain for many years, in a way that music never was.

"Music to me in a sense was therapy.

"It's very cathartic to be able to sing political songs about Zimbabwe. So I sing Redemption Song by Bob Marley. I wrote a song many years ago called Our Zimbabwe, which is a very patriotic song about one's pride in one's nation.

"Music really has been a healing balm for the loss I experienced in cricket."

The 2027 Cricket World Cup returns to Zimbabwe

Olonga has not fully ruled out a more imminent return to Zimbabwe but says he will only go if invited. In 2027, Zimbabwe will co-host the Cricket World Cup once again.

Maybe a neighbouring venue will bring him close - either way there is no regret.

"There was a song I learned in junior school from the film 'Goodbye, Mr. Chips'. It stayed with me, and it epitomises what we're discussing.

"In the final verse: 'In the evening of my life I shall look to the sunset, At a moment in my life when the night is due. And the question I shall ask only I can answer. Was I brave and strong and true?'

"I suspect that song has been an anthem for me in all of my life and had a role in the black armband protest.

"This idea of trying to make a difference, to make the world a better place, to leave a legacy that people remember you for more than just wickets, how much you made or how much of a name you made for yourself.

"I don't think they satisfy as much as doing the right thing and feeling that there was a moment in time when you could have made a difference and you stood up and were counted.

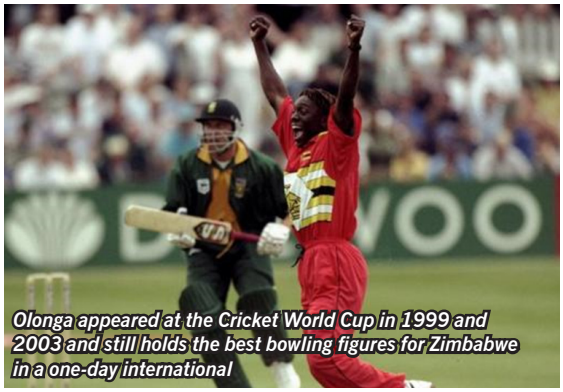
"So the guard of honour is certainly not as satisfying as reflecting: I was brave, I was strong, I was true - I was.

"That self respect is something that no-one gives to you. You have to earn it by your choices and decisions.

"I hope most people will think that I was a man of substance, I was a man of conviction for what was right.

"If I die knowing that a lot of people at least gave me kudos for that, then I've done my work on Earth."

Henry Olonga has just released the 'expanded' version of his autobiography Blood, Sweat and Treason as an audiobook.



Olonga appeared at the Cricket World Cup in 1999 and 2003 and still holds the best bowling figures for Zimbabwe in a one-day international



Olonga progressed from the knockout stages of The Voice but was eliminated in The Battle for a place in the final



Destiny's Child singer Kelly Rowland was Olonga's coach on the The Voice in 2019

New Zimbabwe | SPORT

AUSTRALIA: Zimbabwe-born starlet Madanha signs new long term deal at Adelaide United



Panashe Madadha

By Sports Reporter

RISING Zimbabwe-born football star Panashe Madadha is set to continue his development in the Australian topflight football league after signing a new long term contract at A-League outfit Adelaide Utd last Thursday.

The 19-year-old Harare-born wingback has impressed since rising through the ranks of Adelaide United's youth system and into the first team while he has also represented Australia at Under-20 level.

Madanha, who normally plays a winger, has also been used as a makeshift right-back as the club's technical team have not missed an opportunity to utilise his versatility during his breakthrough season at Adelaide United.

The teenage star who is reportedly the quickest player in Adelaide United's squad, is now aiming to cement his place in the team and take his game to the next level after signing a new contract which will see him remaining at the club until the 2025/26 A-League season.

"I'm really excited to have committed the Club in which I've grown up around and played so much of my football," Madanha said in a statement on the club's official website.

"I have supported Adelaide United since moving to SA (South Australia) so it's a dream come true to be able to represent in the famous red, and it would be an honour to help bring more success to the Club.

"I've learnt so much already under Carl (Veart), Airton (Andrioli) and the coaches and can't wait to continue this progress into next season and beyond, and hopefully that will come in the form of more first team starts and maybe some goals.

"But I'm happy to contribute in any position that is needed for the team."

Adelaide United head coach, Carl Veart highlighted the importance of Madanha's signature.

"Panashe is a player I've known for a while now coming through the youth ranks, and he brings so much quality and energy into everything that he does," he said.

"He is a strong boy with a lot of pace at the same time, so he can be really damaging going forward and he's getting better defensively in that right-back position all the time.

"That wasn't his natural spot and we've worked with him for a while now to get to this point and he has showed already he can do it in the A-League.

"But really he can play anywhere, and we're looking forward to what can be a breakthrough season for him."

Madanha has risen from Adelaide United's youth system, culminating in his major role in United's first Championship earlier this month.

He made his first team debut aged just 18 after coming on as a late substitute at home to Newcastle Jets on December 27 last year, followed by his first, assured start a week later against Perth Glory in a 2-0 win also at Coopers Stadium.

It was the first time a Zimbabwe-born player had featured in the competition, and he now has 12 A-League, and one Australia Cup appearance to his name.

After moving to Australia at the age of four, Madanha started at Adelaide Olympic and FK Beograd as a junior, before quickly moving into the Football SA NTC Program at Under 13 level, and then swiftly into Adelaide United's youth set-up.