

6. The Military Strategy for the Next Elections

As Brigadier General Douglas Nyikayaramba publicly stated on 27 May 2011, the military demands elections to be held in 2011 and want President Mugabe to win those elections. Nyikayaramba further publicly proclaimed his support for ZANU-PF and that, in line with what numerous army generals have already said, he would never salute any other leader who is not Robert Mugabe or a ZANU-PF cadre, ending with an observation that the army cannot be separated from ZANU-PF.¹ The military remains entrenched and partisan towards ZANU-PF.

Sources close to ZANU-PF indicate that the military has demanded, and ZANU-PF has agreed, that at least 25% of all legislative seats that ZANU-PF will contest must be reserved for serving or retired military personnel. Vice Air Marshall Henry Muchena has allegedly 'resigned' from the army to take on the role of ZANU-PF director of election campaigns ahead of the next election. The military has so far this year recruited at least 5, 000 soldiers possibly to boost numbers ahead of elections. The deployment of Vice Air Marshall Muchena to the party is to ensure that the military takes direct control of rebuilding party structures from cell, to branch, ward, district, provincial to national level. This strategy will result in a take over of ZANU-PF by the military.

Earlier this year, various civic groups reported deployment of soldiers across the country to direct election campaigns for ZANU-PF and to spearhead violence and intimidation. Zimbabwe Peace Project (ZPP), a civic group with monitors across the country has reported that the army has stepped up its presence in villages while ZANU-PF militia have set up torture camps in some parts of the country – in a chilling reminder to voters of the unprecedented violence that swept across Zimbabwe in 2008.

Military presence in communities has been a source of constant fear for villagers, who anticipate a repeat of the 2008 electoral violence at the hands of the ZANU PF militias and serving members of the army.² Soldiers, police and the militia have harassed residents of Budiriro, Mbare and Chitungwiza; assaulted many of them and destroyed property belonging to perceived MDC supporters.³ In January 2011 alone dozens of people were injured when soldiers assaulted villagers in Gutu, a district in the southern Zimbabwean province of Masvingo.⁴

Information from military sources is that more than 80, 000 youth militia, war veterans and soldiers will be deployed across the country in an army-led drive to ensure victory for ZANU-PF candidate, President Mugabe in the next elections.⁵ A three-month investigation by a

¹ Jason Moyo, *Military's place is 'in the barracks,'* Mail and Guardian, June 3, 2011

² Zimbabwe Peace Project, Summary on politically motivated Human Rights violations, February 2010

³ Zimonline, Tuesday 18 January 2011; MDC says military Deployed in rural Areas

⁴ Ibid

⁵ The Zimbabwe Mail, Tuesday 08 February 2011; Military plot to keep ailing Mugabe in power

Zimbabwean online publication that included interviews with Cabinet ministers, senior military officers and ZANU-PF functionaries, revealed a desperate determination by Zimbabwe's top generals to thwart Tsvangirai, with some even openly bragging that they would topple the Prime Minister should he somehow triumph against the planned violence to emerge the winner of the polls.⁶

The military plans to deploy senior commanders from either the Zimbabwe Defence Forces (ZDF) or the Central Intelligence Organization in each of Zimbabwe's 59 districts to coordinate the fight to retain Mugabe in power. The strategy is to unleash enough violence and terror, worse than that seen in the bloody 2008 presidential run-off poll in which at least 200 of Tsvangirai's supporters died and tens of thousands others were left homeless. The move is aimed at ensuring that a thoroughly cowed electorate will, on voting day back Mugabe in enough numbers to save the veteran President from having to face another second round vote.

Vice Air Marshal Henry Muchena will be in charge of the ZANU-PF election campaign, Major Gen. Engelbert Rugeje will be in charge of coordinating Masvingo province. Rugeje is reported to have already started the terror campaign on MDC supporters in the province where he has been blamed for several acts of violence and intimidation. In Mugabe's Mashonaland West home province Brigadier General David Sigauke is tipped to run the brutal campaign to keep the ZANU PF leader in power, while Brigadier General Douglas Nyikayaramba will be in charge of Manicaland province.

Retired Brigadier General Victor Rungani will be in charge of the campaign in Mashonaland East province while vice Air Marshal Abu Basutu will oversee the campaign in Matabeleland South province. Brigadiers General Sibusio Bussie Moyo, Sibangumuzi Khumalo, Etherton Shungu will cover Midlands, Matabeleland North, Mashonaland Central provinces, respectively. Colonel Chris Sibanda and Air Commodore Michael Karakadzai will, respectively, run the campaign to neutralise opposition to Mugabe in the metropolitan provinces of Bulawayo and Harare that are seen as Tsvangirai's strongholds.

Other top soldiers of the ranks of major general, brigadier general or air vice-marshal and assisted by CIO agents will head provincial command centers that will direct the onslaught against the MDC in the provinces. Some of the senior commanders have already started work in the provinces meeting ZANU-PF and traditional leaders to plot the way forward. Junior commanders and hundreds of lower ranking soldiers, some of who have already been deployed in recent months in villages in some districts, will be at the disposal of the senior commanders.

⁶ Maromo. J., [http://www.zimonline.co.za/ArticleId=6529Military plot to keep Mugabe in power](http://www.zimonline.co.za/ArticleId=6529Military%20plot%20to%20keep%20Mugabe%20in%20power) Wednesday 19 January 2011

7. Power-Sharing Government Failure to Subject the Military to Civilian Control

There has been a degree of acknowledgment within Zimbabwe's political leadership and in SADC that the military has no business making partisan political statements or interfering in electoral affairs. For much of the last decade the MDC has made clear calls that the military's place is in the barracks. In 2002, when military chiefs stated that they would not salute Tsvangirai or allow anyone without liberation war credentials to rule Zimbabwe SADC responded swiftly. The then Chairperson of the SADC Organ Troika on Defence, Politics and Security Cooperation, Dr. Joachim Chissano of Mozambique rebuked the military chiefs and warned them not to engage in politics.⁷ However, there has been little or no action taken to reign in the military.

At the formation of the power-sharing government in February 2009, Morgan Tsvangirai and his MDC party had correctly identified the military as the main factor blocking democratic change and had demanded that a new body be established in terms of the law to replace the partisan Joint Operations Command (JOC). Although ZANU-PF relented, allowing the National Security Council to be established for the purposes of ensuring civilian control and oversight of all military policies and operations, the body has never really functioned properly. Instead, the JOC has continued to meet regularly, in parallel to formal government structures to decide military policy and operations. Prime Minister Tsvangirai is a member of the defunct National Security Council but not a member of JOC, where virtually all service chiefs on it have vowed not to salute him.

The power-sharing government has dismally failed to ensure accountability of military operations and to restore professionalism, independence and impartiality to the leadership of the military. All attempts to reform the military or the broader security sector have met fierce resistance from ZANU-PF. At its 5th congress in December 2009, ZANU-PF resolved that security sector reform would never be allowed in Zimbabwe. Resolution 6 proclaimed:

Zanu PF, as the Party of revolution and the people's vanguard, shall not allow the Security Forces of Zimbabwe to be the subject of any negotiation for a so called 'security sector reform' that is based on patent misrepresentations of Zimbabwe's heroic history and for the mere purpose of weakening the state so that it can be easily overthrown.⁸

ZANU-PF has continued to resist any attempts to examine the military role in political and electoral affairs despite insistence by the MDC and civil society groups that there can be no lasting solution to the political and governance conflict in Zimbabwe that does not directly address security sector governance reform.

SADC Facilitator for the Zimbabwe peace process, president Zuma and his facilitation team have, together with the GPA negotiating parties in Zimbabwe, placed security sector reform on

⁷ C Hove, Targets of a dictatorship, *The Standard*, 21 April 2002, p 7.

⁸ 5th ZANU-PF National People's Congress Resolutions, December 9 – 13, 2009.

the agenda of the talks. It is a key aspect of the elections roadmap that SADC and the Zimbabwe political leadership are preparing. However, it remains unclear whether SADC is prepared to put its foot down to ensure security sector reform in Zimbabwe. On the Zimbabwe question, SADC has always faltered at the all-important level of implementation of agreed positions. A full implementation of the letter and spirit of the GPA, for instance, would be sufficient to ensure acceptable levels of security sector reform.

8. Recommendations

To the Power-Sharing Government of Zimbabwe

- Take all necessary measures to de-militarize all electoral institutions, particularly the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission, and end the politicization of the military in order to ensure that Zimbabwe has a professional, independent and non-partisan military that owes its allegiance to Zimbabwe and not to a single political party.
- Take measures to transform the military into a professional, apolitical force that does not participate in party politics and remains loyal to whatever government is constitutionally elected by the people of Zimbabwe. This includes measures to retire and replace the current political leadership of the military that has blatantly demonstrated partisanship towards ZANU-PF.
- In line with Global Political Agreement provisions, ensure that the National Security Council charged with civilian oversight of the security sector, particularly the military, is fully functional and effective and that the extremely partisan and highly politicized Joint Operations Command is permanently disbanded.
- Recall and confine to their barracks all soldiers currently deployed across the country.
- Direct all military leaders to jointly issue a public statement denouncing meddling in political and civilian affairs and committing themselves and their troops to professional, independent and non-partisan conduct.

To the Member States of the Southern African Development Community

- Press the Zimbabwean government to urgently implement security sector reform in order to completely remove and separate the military from political and civilian affairs.
- Publicly acknowledge that a partisan and politicized military lies at the heart of the governance crisis in Zimbabwe and that any meaningful roadmap to fresh elections must speak directly to pressing issues of security sector reform with clear timeframes.
- Open negotiations with military chiefs with a view of making sure that they do not interfere with the electoral process or with a smooth transfer of power. While the negotiations can be secret, the guarantees for change must be made public.
- SADC and the AU should indicate to the military in clear terms that undemocratic conduct from the security sector that undermine both the SADC and AU principles and guidelines governing democratic elections will not be accepted and will attract appropriate measures from the two bodies.
- Agreed terms of security sector reform in the GPA and in the elections roadmap should have clear timeframes must be guaranteed and underwritten by SADC and the AU. Zimbabwe alone cannot engage in effective security sector reform as those implicated hold the reigns of power and have proven to be unwilling to reform.

- Ensure that Zimbabwe political leaders agree to and implement an elections roadmap that leads to the creation of right conditions for the country to hold free and fair elections that fully comply with SADC principles and guidelines governing the conduct of democratic elections.
- SADC and the AU should deploy peace monitors and observers at least three months before and after elections to prevent violence and intimidation and to ensure smooth transfer of power to the legitimate winner of elections.