

The Zimbabwean

A Voice for the Voiceless

At Times, I Really Wish Zimbabwe Was a Colony Again!

by Tendai Ruben Mbofana

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Today is one of those mornings, which just leaves any person (no matter how good natured they may be) furious and agitated, confused and dazed - wondering what really is going on, and where is all this leading to!

It is already terrible and unbearable enough living in a country, whose economy has been wantonly and cruelly destroyed by a clueless, 'visionless', and corrupt ruling elite – who have turned a once vibrant and prosperous nation upside down, within a record breaking short space of time.



We have already had to endure decades of unmitigated poverty and unspeakable suffering at the hands of this ruling establishment – who have done everything to outdo one another in looting Zimbabwe dry, destroying everything in their path, and turning whatever they touch into useless, unproductive, and choking dust.

With uncontrollable unemployment (practically over ninety percent out of formal employment), once thriving companies shutting down (or, downsizing) at a frightening scale, galloping inflation which has eroded earnings of even those blessed enough to either be gainfully employed or operating their own small enterprises – in addition to fatally collapsed health and education sectors.

Yet, all this mayhem being presided over by a kleptomaniac and oppressive regime, whose only goal in life is to kill, steal, and destroy – which, I am sure, provides them all the sadistic and psychopathic comfort and satisfaction they need.

One would have thought forty years of these problems was horrendous and terrifying enough for any average individual – but, no, not in Zimbabwe!

Here we have any adage – kutsva dumbu nemusana (being burnt both on one's back and stomach), and nhamo yefodya kumberi ichitsva kushure yakarumwa (the ordeal of the cigarette, being burnt at the front, whilst bitten at the back).

Anyone looking from the outside into Zimbabwe would be forgiven for thinking that we could have better luck with an opposition leading the show.

However, they would be grossly mistaken. And, today is one of those times... amongst numerous other similar occasions.

For some of us who reside in opposition-held towns and cities, our predicament appears worse than the rest of our fellow countrymen and women – for we, indeed, are living the life of the proverbial cigarette.

As if failing to make ends meet was not terrible enough, we now have to live without running water, uncollected rubbish, potholed roads, and street lights that either ceased functioning decades ago or new residential areas having none erected at all.

Today, as I woke up in Redcliff town, there was still no tap water – for nearly a week now.

Frustrated and infuriated with another addition to the never-ending problems we have to deal with each and every day – over issues that citizens of other countries (including war-torn ones) take for granted – a question that always pesters me, but I try to block, persistently found its way back into my mind.

If the ruling ZANU PF has failed, and the opposition MDC has also failed – both gripped by a sickening propensity for offering excuses after excuses – what does that say about us as a people?

Are the problems we are faced with in Zimbabwe, ever since we attained our political independence from Britain in 1980, purely a ZANU PF maladministration and mismanagement matter – or, is there more to this story than meets the eye?

I know that I am speaking from a point of exceeding disappointment and desperation – but, surely, when both our main political parties (jointly encompassing the vast majority of Zimbabweans) have proven utterly incapable of leading, what does that say about us as black people?

Please understand my frustrations – but, when was the last time this country had any semblance of a working system?

Was it not during the colonial Rhodesian times?

Was that not the only period when water actually came out of the taps continually, electricity supply constantly available, jobs for the taking with liveable wages (at least, far much better than what workers are getting today) coupled with stable prices, refuse always collected on time everytime, roads rehabilitated as a norm rather than a campaign exception, companies opened up more than they closed down, and schools and hospitals actually providing their mandated services?

Can I be blamed, then, for looking back at those days, and thinking – umm, maybe we were better off as a colony?

I am truly fed up, and sick and tired of all this daily suffering! Surely, how can we succeed as a people, when all that we are forced to think about is how to make it through the day?

Tendai Ruben Mbofana is a social justice activist, writer, author, and political commentator.