



global witness

Zimbabwe's elections: intimidation, vote-rigging and diamonds

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Introduction

Global Witness has grave concerns about Zimbabwe's elections, scheduled to take place on July 31st. The elections, which should mark Zimbabwe's transition to a more free and fair democracy, look instead to bear the hallmarks of previous flawed votes. Much needed reforms set out in Zimbabwe's constitution have not been undertaken, most notably a clean-up of the electoral roll and security sector reforms. Intimidation of voters and civil society members has increased throughout the year¹ and accusations of election-rigging by Mugabe's ZANU PF party are more and more frequent.² Global Witness is particularly concerned about the impact that diamond money may be having on the electoral process and outcome. There are credible indications that diamond revenues could be a source of off-budget cash for ZANU PF and partisan security forces and may therefore be funding anti-democratic tactics being employed by Mugabe's party.

Diamonds and ZANU PF

Global Witness has exposed links between some of the mining companies operating in the diamond-rich Marange region of Zimbabwe, and members of the military and other ZANU insiders. Our research has shown that two joint venture companies with complicated ownership structures appear to be providing diamond revenues to the army and an individual close to Mugabe.

Last year the deputy minister of mines admitted that Zimbabwe's largest diamond mining company, Anjin, is 40% owned by Zimbabwe Defence Industries, a private arms company wholly owned by the Ministry of Defence. He stated that a further 10% is held by state-owned mining company Zimbabwe Mining Development Corporation (ZMDC).³ However our research has shown that ZMDC used another company, Matt Bronze, to incorporate its share in Anjin. Matt Bronze's principal officer is Brigadier Charles Tarumbwa, a senior lawyer in the Ministry of Defence. An affidavit in the corporate registry indicates that Tarumbwa is a significant shareholder in Anjin.⁴ This raises concerns that Tarumbwa is receiving revenues from Anjin on behalf of the Ministry of Defence. Our research also showed that a second ZMDC joint venture, Mbada, is 25% owned by a company linked to Air Vice-Marshall Robert Mhlanga, a close confidante of Robert Mugabe, again pointing to possible off-budget funding to ZANU's inner circle.⁵

Global Witness has also revealed an extremely worrying relationship between a Hong Kong based businessman, Sam Pa and the notoriously violent Zimbabwean secret police, the Central Intelligence Organisation (CIO).⁶ According to documents obtained by Global Witness, Pa donated \$100 million dollars and 200 pick-up trucks to the CIO. In return Pa received diamonds and accessed other business opportunities in Zimbabwe. According to one source, the money was allocated to projects specifically designed to discredit the MDC leadership and to block the channels of radio stations such as SW Radio Africa and Voice of America. There is no evidence that Mr Pa knew what specific uses his payments to the CIO would be put to.

Diamond finance could be extremely significant for ZANU PF. After the 2008 election and the formation of the Government of National Unity, ZANU PF lost control of the finance ministry, whilst retaining key security departments. This set the stage for a behind the scenes struggle for sources of cash to fund partisan security forces loyal to President Mugabe and ZANU PF.⁷ Finance Minister Tendai Biti has repeatedly claimed that diamond revenues are not making it into the public coffers. Most recently, Biti stated Zimbabwe did not have enough money to fund elections and challenged Mugabe to release \$150m dollars of diamond money being illegally withheld by ZANU.⁸

Intimidation by the security sector

Over the past six months, security forces have been deployed to intimidate MDC supporters and other critics of ZANU PF.⁹ There has also been a clampdown on civil society with arrests and police raids of organisations including ZimRights and the Zimbabwe Election Support Network.¹⁰ According to Zimbabwe's new constitution, security and police forces in Zimbabwe are required to be politically neutral. However this is far from the case and no effort appears to have been made to reform the security sector in order to meet these requirements. Since the violence around the 2008 elections, the leadership of the CIO, military and police is reportedly unchanged and no officers have faced prosecution for abuses.¹¹ Furthermore, the security forces remain under ZANU PF-led ministries.

Rigging the voters' roll?

In the run up to the elections the MDC-T has raised concerns about discrepancies on the voters' roll. On July 17th, an independent organisation, the Research and Advocacy Unit was gagged by the High Court to prevent the release of results of an audit of the roll.¹² However key findings of the report were published by independent media and showed huge discrepancies, including that up to 2 million voters under the age of 30 are unregistered and that potentially hundreds of thousands of dead people remain on the list.¹³

Further controversy about the electoral roll has been sparked by information reportedly leaked to Morgan Tsvangarai by a CIO insider, alleging that ZANU PF has employed a technology company with Israeli links, Nikuv, to tamper with the electoral roll.¹⁴ According to one MDC-T member of parliament, the operation, allegedly based in the Ministry of Defence, is not receiving money from the public purse.¹⁵ This raises questions about how

this project has been funded and why it should sit under the control of the Ministry of Defence.

Conclusion

Widespread voter intimidation and frequent crackdowns on civil society mean the chances of free and fair elections in Zimbabwe appear slim. Accusations of rigging of the voters' roll also raise questions about the poll's credibility. None of these activities come without a price-tag and the extent to which diamond revenues may be funding ZANU PF's undemocratic tactics merits further investigation.

Recommendations

- **SADC** in its role as election monitor should investigate all claims of foul play in the harmonised elections, including those surrounding rigging of the electoral register and intimidation of voters and civil society by members of the security sector.
- **The European Union** should delay the lifting of sanctions against state-owned diamond miner, ZMDC until allegations of ZMDC's involvement with the security forces and ZANU PF's electoral campaign can be fully investigated.
- **All countries** with sanctions or other restrictive measures against Zimbabwe should add Anjin and Sam Pa to the list.

¹ Human Rights Watch 'The Elephant in the Room', May 2013 and Amnesty International 'Walk the Talk', July 2013

² 'Fears if rigging dog Zimbabwe vote', SABC, 16 July 2013 available at: <http://tinyurl.com/nb9wqgr>; 'More than 1m extra names on Zim voters roll', zimbabwelection.com, 18 July 2013 available at: <http://tinyurl.com/q9shr7u>; 'Fears Zimbabwe's election is being stolen by Mugabe allies through purge of electoral roll', The Telegraph, 3 July 2013 available at: <http://tinyurl.com/ngkkag7>

³ 'Chimanikire defends army's presence at Chiadzwa' The Herald, 18 June 2012

⁴ Global Witness 'Financing a Parallel Government' July 2012

⁵ Global Witness 'Diamonds: A Good Deal for Zimbabwe' February 2012

⁶ Global Witness, July 2012 op. cit.

⁷ ibid.

⁸ 'Biti: Zimbabwe too broke to hold referendum elections' Voice of America, 21 Dec 2012 and 'Zim finance minister demands "Zanu-PF diamond money for elections"' Zimbabwelection.com 10 July 2013

⁹ Human Rights Watch op. cit.

¹⁰ Amnesty International op. cit.

¹¹ Human Rights Watch op. cit.

¹² <http://www.swradioafrica.com/2013/07/17/high-court-bars-advocacy-group-from-launching-voters-roll-audit/> (Accessed 19/07/13)

¹³ <http://www.swradioafrica.com/Documents/RAUExecutive%20Summary%20of%20Audit%20of%20June%202013%20VotersRoll.pdf> (Accessed 19/07/13)

¹⁴ 'Fears Zimbabwe's election is being stolen by Mugabe allies through purge of the electoral roll' The Telegraph, 3 July 2013

¹⁵ ibid