

President Mugabe delivered a speech that was broadcast live on the national broadcaster, Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation (ZBC) on Sunday, 19 November 2017.

## **PRESIDENT ROBERT MUGABE'S FULL ADDRESS TO THE NATION**

Fellow Zimbabweans, I address you tonight on the back of a meeting I held today with the nation's Security Forces Command Element.

This meeting which was facilitated by a mediation team led by Father Fidelis Mukonori S.J. of the Catholic Church for an operation by the Defence Forces in the week that has gone by, and which was triggered by concerns arising from the recent state of affairs in our country and in the ruling ZANU PF party.

### **Acknowledges Concerns Raised**

Whatever the pros and cons of the way they went about registering those concerns, I, as the President of Zimbabwe and as their Commander-in-Chief, do acknowledge the issues they have drawn my attention to and do believe these were raised in the spirit of honesty and out of deep and patriotic concern for the stability of our nation and for the welfare of our people.

As I address you, I am also aware of a whole range of concerns which has come from you all as citizens of our great country and who thus deserve our untrammelled attention.

### **Returning Nation To Normalcy**

Today's meeting with the Command Element has underscored the need for us to collectively start processes that return our nation to normalcy so all our people can go about their business unhindered in an environment of perfect peace and security, assure that Law and Order obtain and prevail as before, and endure well into the future.

### **A Peaceful Nation, A Peaceful People**

If there is any one observation we have made and drawn from events of the past week, it is the unshakable pedestal upon which rests our state of peace, Law and Order, amply indicating that as Zimbabweans we are generally a peaceably disposed people and with a givenness to expressing our grievances, and to

resolving our differences by ourselves and with a level of dignity, discipline and restraint so rare to many other nations.

This is to be admired. Indeed, such traits must form the pits of our national character and personality, yes, a veritable resource we summon and drawn upon in times of vicissitude.

### **Military Intervention Not A Threat To Authority**

The operation I have alluded to did not amount to a threat to our well-cherished Constitutional Order. Nor was it a challenge to my authority as Head of State and Government. Not even as Commander-in-Chief of the Zimbabwe Defence Forces (ZDF).

To the men, the Command Element remained respectful and comported with dictates and mores of constitutionalism. True, a few incidents may have occurred here and there but these are being corrected.

### **State And Security**

I am happy that throughout the short period, the pillars of state remained functional. Even happier for me and arising from today's meeting is a strong sense of collegiality and comradeship ...*[inaudible]* in the various arms of our security establishment.

This should result in greater peace and offer an abounding sense of security in communities and in our entire nation.

### **Economy**

Among the issues discussed is that relating to our economy which, as we all know, is going through a difficult patch.

### **Intra-Party Fighting\***

Of greater concern, spats between high ranking officials in the Party and government exacerbated by multiple conflicting messages from both the party and government, made criticisms levelled against us inescapable.

## **Government Projects**

Amongst all this, flagship projects already adopted by government stood stalled or mired in needless controversies. All this now has to stop as we inaugurate a new work culture and pace which will show our strong sense of purpose and commitment to turning around our economy in terms of our policies.

Zim Asset government remains committed to improving the social and material conditions of the people.

Government will soon unveil an Entrepreneurial Skills and Business Development Program which will empower and unleash gainful projects at our Growth Points and rural areas.

## **Borne Out of Protracted Struggle**

Fellow Zimbabweans, we are a nation borne out of a protracted struggle for national independence. Our roots lie in that epochal struggles whose goals and ideals must guide our present and structure our future.

## **Tradition of Resistance**

The tradition of resistance is our collective legacy whose core tenets must be subscribed by all across generations and across times.

Indeed this, too, was a great concern for our Commanders who themselves were makers of that revolution and often, at very tender ages and at great personal peril.

## **War Veterans**

We still have in our various communities, veterans of that Founding Struggle who might have found the prevailing management of national and party issues quite alienating. This must be corrected without delay including ensuring that these veterans continue to play central roles in the lives of our nation.

We must all recognize that their participation in the War of Liberation exacted lifelong costs which, whilst hardly repairable, may still be assuaged and ameliorated.

## **Acknowledgement of Concerns Raised**

In respect of the party and party issues raised both by the Commanders and by the general membership of ZANU (PF), these too, stand acknowledged. They have to be attended to with a great sense of urgency.

## **Criticism Against ZANU (PF)**

However, I am aware that as a party of Liberation, ZANU (PF) has, over the years, written elaborate rules and procedures that guide the operations of all its organs and personnel.

Indeed, the current criticism raised against it by the Command Element and some of its members have arisen from a well-founded perception that the party was stretching or even failing in its own rules and procedures.

The way forward thus, cannot be based on swapping vying cliques that ride roughshod over party rules and procedures. There has to be a net return to the guiding principles of our Party as enshrined in its Constitution which must apply fairly and equitably in all situations and before all members.

## **Era of Victimization Is Over**

The era of victimization and arbitrary decisions must be put behind as we all embrace a new ethos predicated on the supreme law of our Party and nourished by an abiding sense of comradeship.

## **ZANU (PF) And Generational Divide**

To all this, must be a general recognition that ZANU (PF) is a party of traditions and has been served by successive generations who are bound together by shared ideals and values which must continue to reign supreme in our nation.

Hints of intergeneration conflict must be resolved through a harmonized melding of old established players as they embrace and welcome new rules, new ones through a well-defined sense of hierarchy and succession.

## **Forthcoming ZANU (PF) Congress**

Indeed, all these matters will be discussed and settled at the forthcoming Congress within the framework of a clear roadmap that seeks to resolve once

and for all any omissions or contradictions that have affected our party negatively.

The Congress is due in a few weeks from now. I will preside over its processes which must not be pre-possessed by any acts calculated to undermine it, or to compromise the outcomes in the eyes of the public.

### **Aware of Developments In The Party**

As I conclude this address, I am aware that many developments have occurred in the Party or have been championed and done by individuals in the name of the Party. Given the failings of the past and the anger these might have triggered in some quarters, such developments are quite understandable.

However, we cannot be guided by bitterness or vengefulness both of which would not make us any better Party members, or any better Zimbabweans.

### **Policy of Reconciliation**

Our hallowed Policy of Reconciliation which we pronounced in 1980 and through which we reached out to those who had occupied and oppressed us for nearly a century, and those who had traded fire with in a bitter war, surely cannot be unavailable to our own, both in the party and in our nation.

We must learn to forgive and resolve contradictions real or perceived in a comradely Zimbabwean spirit.

I am confided that from tonight our whole nation at all levels gets refocused as we put shoulder to the wheel amidst the promising agriculture season already upon us. Let us all move forward reminding ourselves of our wartime mantra: “*Iwe neni tinebasa*” [We have work to do].

I thank you and good night.

Transcribed by Manyika Review.

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