



## **Zimbabwe: Zim Economic Crisis - the Voice of the People Cries for Help**

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"The voice of the people is the voice of God!" a rhetoric popularized by President Emmerson Mnangagwa, rallying citizens to support his administration has come under scrutiny from the general populace, hard hit by the current economic situation prevailing in the country.

A visit to Harare's oldest suburb, Mbare opened a can of worms on how Zimbabweans are suffering due to government's economic policies implemented by the new administration since taking over power from former president, Robert Mugabe.

One resident, Gift Machechera had no kind words for the ruling party. He wishes Zimbabweans had never ousted the soon to be 95 year old Mugabe.

"The current government has failed, dismally. Things are tough, very tough, we cannot afford to even get in town because the bond notes have become very useless. The Kombi operators are no longer accepting small coins, they want the notes. But where do I get them because when I get to the bank, I'm only being given bond coins in 10 cents, 25 cents and 50 cents.

"Now if the coins are no longer accepted, what must I must do? Am I the one who is making this money," questions Gift, as our small talk begins to heat up.

Gift blames President Mnangagwa for remaining quiet in this raging economic storm, further questioning his sincerity and leadership qualities.

"What kind of a leader keeps quiet when things are not OK? Why is he not saying anything? Is it because things are well for him? This is when we miss Mugabe, at least he would say something and things would normalize," says Gift while sipping the last drop of his beer, which he says he bought for \$4 after Delta Beverages increased the prices a few days ago.

If only he was not sober, he says, he would not be seeing the reality of the current situation.

Alcohol has for long "helped" most unemployed youths escape the harsh realities of the current economic situation.

Solo, Gift's friend says he regrets ever believing in the current government.

"I was very vocal in vouching for Mnangagwa. I was hated in this community for believing in this man but now I have become a laughing stock for the community. ED should know that he is killing our generation, he is destroying the future of the youths, we voted for him and he needs to listen to us.

"He is the one who came with his rhetoric that the voice of the people is the voice of God, now the same voice has spoken, he needs to attend to our cries. Our little brothers are not going to school and do you know the end result? The end result is that ED is helping to breed a generation full of criminals and loose morale women. It's his responsibility because he has remained docile," says Solo.

As we go about the interviews, two boys of school going age engage in a fist fight over rights to carry a small plastic ball home.

These children are supposed to be at school but due to the sharp rise in schools fees and uniforms they said their parents decided to keep them home.

Happymore Sabeta (39) a mother of two confessed that the current economic situation ruined her marriage after her husband unceremoniously left their home, possibly out of frustration at failing to provide for his family.

"I have a seven year child, I have tried to everything I can to fend for the child, I sell freezit but it's not enough. The child has high expectations from me as a single parent, I don't have anything to offer for him and have lost all my hope.

"Now all that's left is for me to watch him grow into a criminal. And it is the same case for my five year old daughter, by the look of things, she is likely to end up in prostitution because this is all she knows and she cannot go school because I dint have the money.

"I last ate yesterday and I don't know where I will get my next meal, so where will I get school fees when I cannot have money for my family's upkeep.

"My husband left me because thing were getting worse, I have tried the maintenance route but his whereabouts remain known to him alone, he is reported to be in South Africa," said Sabeta.

She pleaded with President Mnangagwa's wife, Auxillia, to come to her rescue.

"We appeal to the first lady to at least talk to the school authorities to reduce their fees, she is a woman who gave birth and knows how it feels to see a child grown into a zombie," she said while shedding tears.

Government insists the economy is on a reform path, urging citizens to bear the pain under what Finance Minister Professor Mthuli Ncube says are austerity measures but signs on the wall signal collapse including international ratings.

In the World Bank's Doing Business 2018 index, Zimbabwe ranks 159 out of 190; in the Cato Institute's Economic Freedom of the World listing for 2018, Zimbabwe is 127 out of 162; in the World Economic Forum's Global Competitiveness Report 2018, Zimbabwe ranks 128 out of 140.

In the Heritage Foundation's Index of Economic Freedom 2018, Zimbabwe is 174 out of 180; in the Cato Institute's Human Freedom Index 2017, Zimbabwe ranks 146 out of 159.

In the Bertelsmann Stiftung's Transformation Index (BTI) 2018, Zimbabwe ranks 113 out of 129 countries and this is a bad monkey on Mnangagwa's back.