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Harare – SIXTY-SIX civil society organisations released a joint statement, blasting corrupt public officials on Thursday, February 13, 2014 in Harare.

Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) Third Vice President Peter Mutasa read the statement at the press conference chaired by Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition (CiZC) Chairperson Dewa Mavhinga.

Zimrights Director Okay Machisa, College Lecturers Association of Zimbabwe (COLAZ) President David Dzatsunga, Msasa Project Programs Officer Nyasha Mazango and Combined Harare Residents Association (CHRA) Chairperson Simbarashe Moyo were panellists.

“We the undersigned members of civil society representing various sectors of Zimbabwean society are alarmed and concerned by the reckless behaviour, uncaring attitude, corruption and bad governance that is being exhibited and taking place in our local government, parastatals and quasi-government bodies,” Mutasa read.

“We deplore such levels of corruption, which are a manifestation of lack of corporate governance and disservice to the public.

“We would like to register our sternest disapproval of the breakdown of public accountability, wide-

spread corruption in public institutions and death of conscience in public officials who have become shockingly parasitic on the State by siphoning large millions of public funds through obscene salaries, and shadowy transactions.”



The panel at the Joint CSO Press Conference

The civil society organisations called for a swift muck-racking of all public institutions by means of a commission of inquiry to investigate “the obscene salary saga, tenderpreneurship and any other underhand dealings in the public sector.”

“This should also include where necessary carrying out forensic audits in suspected sectors so as to globally expose the extent of this problem.”

The organisations condemned the passing of the Condonation Bill which approved an overrun on the 2013 Budget of US\$ 400 million, saying it set “a very bad precedent”, and betrayed an attitude of “unrestrained spendthrift”.

Machisa revealed at the press conference that a march that had been planned by civil society organisations with the purpose of handing over petitions to parastatals and parent ministries over corrupt activities had been denied a go-ahead by the police.

Police are supposed to be informed according to Public Order and Security Act (POSA).

“Two weeks ago we wrote to the police and indicated that we wanted to carry out a physical march that was going to culminate in the handing over of petitions to respective parastatals as well as parent ministries,” he said.

“Well, yesterday we received a letter from the police not sanctioning the march that we were supposed to be carrying out today.”

Machisa said the police gave the excuse that they had not been given finer details, including pertaining to the regalia of the marchers. Machisa however said such details had been provided in a prior letter last Friday, after a meeting with the police where they demanded the specifics.

“We did not waste time that Friday we made sure that the letter had been corrected.”

“We were shocked yesterday only to realise that they were still talking to the same letter that we agreed together that it needed to be corrected.”

“We tried yesterday to rush to the court to seek a court order for us to proceed; that has not happened so far.”



Dewa Mavhinga—CiZC Chairperson

CiZC Chairperson Mavhinga said the country had slid into “a crisis of values”, policy contradictions and possible factional fights that affected government operations.

“Clearly, we are confronted with a crisis of values as a nation. The salarygate does show that there is a serious crisis of values, where people earn such unimaginable salaries,” Mavhinga said.

“But also there is serious policy discord. When one arm of government, the police who are supposed to be exhibiting zero tolerance to corruption deny civil society the right to march to express their dissatisfaction with what is happening.”

“That does show clearly that perhaps we are being taken for a ride as citizens of Zimbabwe, that indeed it might not be a genuine anti-corruption drive, but perhaps even factionalism fights playing out in the national space.”

“We are not duped by these developments; we see that there is a lack of political will. When we talk about heads rolling it’s not about pieces of news in the media, but the law taking its course.”

Police assault demonstrators

Harare – THE Zimbabwe Republic Police (ZRP) abruptly ended the peaceful march of activists belonging to the Women of Zimbabwe Arise (WOZA) with savage beatings at Parliament on Thursday, February 13, 2014 in Harare.

Ironically, the women in their petition were calling for the police to be at the forefront of protecting human rights in line with the new Constitution; which they said was “a special rose” for the country as citizens prepared to celebrate St. Valentine’s Day on Friday.

“Police must now leave behind the name ‘Police Force’ and become a police service – they must be civil rights heroes and score zero abuses by respecting the constitution,” the WOZA statement said.

“Don’t let them trample on our rose.”

Yet, in a spectacular fashion, the police just did it – savagely broke up the peaceful demonstration with spirited beatings which scattered the women almost in a blink of an eye.



Section 59 of the Constitution guarantees the right to demonstrate and petition, but the police ignored it, and landed their truncheons on the women.

This is despite the fact that there is a Supreme Court ruling of 2010 barring the police from attacking WOZA activists, when they stage their annual, St. Valentine’s Day peaceful march for social justice.

The marchers were calling for an end in white collar crime such as corruption, and asking the government to look into the deterioration of service delivery in the local government,

health and education sectors.

“The Valentine’s Day comes at a time when there is widespread plundering of national resources and widespread corruption in the public sector,” the statement by the organisation said.

“Despite these high salaries and lavish lifestyles of our public servants, the promised education remains a dream and school levies have sky rocketed.

“This year more children are being chased from schools for non-payment of fees and the Basic Education Assistance Module (BEAM) is bankrupt.

“In March 2013 we voted for a new Constitution expecting that by now it would already be activated and fully implemented and new laws would be helping us to enjoy the fruits...why can’t parliament and senate activate it so we can enjoy it together?”

“City councils leave the sewerage to ferment and spill over around our houses. Our roads are now impassable but top chefs, executives, earn obscene salaries.

“Police road blocks have become far too many and the source of great corruption and suffering for commuters.

“Free maternity care is also an unfulfilled promise – hospitals cannot even provide expectant mothers with water to wash themselves.”

WOZA in 2013 won its case at the African Commission on Human and People’s Rights (ACHPR) after the women’s organisation approached the continental body over violation of its right to protest, and the brutal manner in which police dealt with its peaceful marches.

One of the lawyers representing the women, Belindah Chinowawa, said last year that the appeal to the continental body had been prompted by failure of local remedies.

She said police continued to ignore the Supreme Court ruling passed in favour of WOZA in 2010 by assaulting the women.

Once again, the police remained defiant by breaking up a peaceful march of the organisation, and more beatings on Thursday.