



VOICES OF HOPE NEWSLETTER

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Zimbabwe Council of Churches

Can the Party Continue While John's Head is in the Platter?



In a chilling tale that echoes the biblical story of John the Baptist, where a birthday celebration turned into a gruesome scene, Zimbabwe finds itself in a similar predicament. The killing of John the Baptist during Herod's daughter's birthday party serves as a haunting metaphor for the current political climate in the country.

Just like in the biblical story, where no one questioned why the party continued while John's head lay on a platter in the same room, Zimbabweans witnessed a disputed election marred by numerous irregularities. Despite the controversy surrounding the election, incumbent President Mnangagwa proceeded with his inauguration, seemingly unaffected by the concerns raised by the opposition and the international community.

While the party may continue for some, there are those who question the moral and ethical implications of carrying on as if nothing has happened. The Zimbabwean scenario calls for a collective introspection and a genuine commitment to address the concerns raised by the opposition and the international community.

The Zimbabwe Council of Churches (ZCC) Secretary General, Reverend Wilfred Dimingu, shed light on this unsettling scenario during a recent Scenario Mapping exercise held at the Kentucky Hotel in the capital. The exercise aimed to explore potential future scenarios in light of the volatile political situation following the 23rd August harmonized elections.

Reverend Dimingu drew a parallel between the biblical story and the Zimbabwean context, highlighting the eerie resemblance between the two. Just as the partygoers in Herod's palace carried on with their festivities as if nothing had happened, the Zimbabwean government proceeded with the inauguration, seemingly unfazed by the disputed election and the concerns raised by various stakeholders. The general public seemed to be distancing themselves from national issues and are much more concerned with their daily activities.

"After John was executed his head was put in the platter and was in the room where the party was being held but no one was bold enough to ask why the party was continuing while John's head was in the room, Just like in Zimbabwe we recently had a contested election and people are going about doing their daily activities as if nothing happened," he said.

The Scenario Mapping exercise provided a platform for participants to discuss and analyze potential unfolding scenarios in the country. It underscored the need for critical reflection and dialogue to address the political crisis and ensure a peaceful and inclusive way forward.

The disputed election and the subsequent inauguration have raised questions about the legitimacy of the government and the democratic process in Zimbabwe. The lack of accountability and transparency has left many Zimbabweans disillusioned and concerned about the future of their country. A number of Zimbabweans especially those in the urban areas are now prisoners of hope as they are hopeful that elections will turn around their fortunes but they have always been disputed since the country's independence.

As the country navigates through these uncertain times, it is crucial for all stakeholders to engage in constructive dialogue and work towards finding a peaceful resolution. Only through transparency, accountability, and genuine dialogue can Zimbabwe overcome its current challenges and pave the way for a brighter future.



Strengthening Civic Participation: ZCC's Provincial Training of Trainers on Policy Analysis and Advocacy



Participants during the training on Policy Analysis and advocacy

The Zimbabwe Council of Churches in partnership with other members of the Zimbabwe Heads of Christian Denomination (ZHOCD) recently organized a Provincial Training of Trainers on Policy Analysis and Advocacy in Masvingo and Matabeleland North Provinces aimed at enhancing the participation of communities to partake in issues that affect them both at the local and national levels.

The training was part of the ZHOCD partners' collective efforts to strengthen the role of the church in promoting inclusive civic participation, transparency, and accountability in the devolution processes in the country.

The training was in line of the Trocaire funded project being implemented by the ZCC in Bubi, Chiredzi, Nemamwa, and Lupane districts under the theme Strengthening the role of the church in promoting inclusive civic participation, transparency, and accountability within the devolution processes. ZCC recognizes the importance of active engagement from various sectors of society to ensure effective policy formulation and implementation.

One notable speaker at the training Dr. J Mpofu from Lupane State University, emphasized the importance of inclusive and non-oppressive laws that apply to every citizen in Zimbabwe.

“The law must not be selective, it must be applied to everyone as we are all guided by the same book which is our constitution,” he said. This highlighted the significance of ensuring that policies are fair and just, benefiting all members of society.

The participants were also capacitated on advocacy, its approaches, tools, and the key steps involved. They were given a comprehensive background on advocacy, including the role of community leaders in policy formulation. Participants were able to analyze policies and develop a checklist. Moreover, they successfully drafted a Policy Brief, which is still under development.

During the training sessions, several key issues were raised by the participants. These included citizen exclusion in policy formulation, the lack of church participation in key government issues, misinformation on the devolution process, poor service delivery, and underdevelopment in the provinces. To address these concerns, the participants proposed incorporating them into their Policy Brief and Advocacy Plan, demonstrating their commitment to effecting positive change in their communities.

The Provincial Training of Trainers on Policy Analysis and Advocacy conducted by ZCC serves as a significant step towards promoting inclusive civic participation and strengthening the role of the church in Zimbabwe. Equipping participants with the necessary skills and knowledge, ZHOCD aims to foster transparency, accountability, and effective policy implementation at both the local and national levels.

Zimbabwe Council of Churches Collaborates with Ministry of Women Affairs to Promote Women's Participation in Politics



Honorable Monica Mutsvangwa (centre) during the Meet and Greet in Harare, Zimbabwe

The Zimbabwe Council of Churches (ZCC) recently engaged in a Meet and Greet meeting with the esteemed Minister of Women Affairs, Honorable Monica Mutsvangwa, on the 28th of September 2023. This significant gathering provided a platform for both parties to share a common vision of promoting women's active involvement in politics and leadership roles within the country.

The ZCC aims to strengthen its collaboration with the Ministry of Women Affairs to solidify their relationship and continue advocating for increased participation of women in politics. Recognizing the importance of gender equality and women's empowerment, the ZCC envisions the eradication of Violence Against Women in Politics (VAWP) through sustained engagements like these.

The ZCC's commitment to ending VAWP aligns with one of its core mandates, which is to address gender-based violence and discrimination in partnership with UN Women. Working closely with the Ministry of Women Affairs and other organizations, the ZCC aims to broaden its network and collaborate with like-minded entities that advocate for the end of VAWP and the promotion of women assuming leadership roles in politics.

In addition to its advocacy efforts, the ZCC also seeks to establish a national and regional platform where women can openly discuss and address the issues that affect them in politics. This platform will serve as a space for women to foster support, share experiences, and strategize on ways to overcome the challenges they face in the political arena.

The Meet and Greet meeting with Minister Monica Mutsvangwa marked a significant step forward in the ZCC's ongoing commitment to promoting gender equality and women's empowerment in Zimbabwe.

The ZCC's efforts are in line with the global agenda to achieve gender equality and women's empowerment, as outlined in the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.



Rev Tariro Zhou giving an opening prayer at the Meet and Greet session

ZCC Secretariate joins Youth Ecumenical Fellowship in Sports for Peace games



Rev Mukwakwami sharing devotions during the opening Ceremony

The Zimbabwe Council of Churches Secretariat represented by Reginald Ngwenya, Kudzi Gwamanda, Justice Tapatapa and Romeo Gohwa joined the Marondera Youth Ecumenical Fellowship (YEF) for sports for peace games. The games were conducted as part of the International Day Of Peace celebrations.

In attendance were over 70 youths drawn from ZCC Member Churches. The games aimed to create a positive and inclusive environment where participants could foster mutual respect.

The event started with a devotion from Rev Mukwakwami, who encouraged young people to enjoy their youthfulness in Christ. Romeo Gohwa proceeded to explain the tournament's purpose, and emphasized on the importance of promoting peace through sports. More so, Mr Justice Tapatapa raised awareness on Cholera. He encourage participants to protect themselves and their loved ones through improving their sanitation and drinking safe water.

Various sporting disciplines such as football, basketball, netball, volleyball and athletics were played on the day. Matches were conducted in a friendly and fair manner. Participants demonstrated excellent sportsmanship, encouraging fair play, teamwork, and respect for each other.

During healthy breaks, participants engaged in informal interactions, fostering friendships and mutual understanding. These interactions played a pivotal role in strengthening ecumenism among participants.

The Sports for Peace games successfully brought together youths from diverse backgrounds and fostered unity and understanding. Moving forward, the youths plan to organize similar events, and extend invitations to non Christian youths to promote peace and harmony in Zimbabwe.



Mixed boys and girls basketball



Girls Netball

Zimbabwe Council of Churches plays pivotal role in 2023 Elections



ZCC delegation with the National Council of Churches in Kenya (NCCCK) during a learning visit

Zimbabwe Council of Churches (ZCC) has played a significant role in the country's Long and Short-term electoral processes that took place on the 23rd and 24th of August. From voter education to election observation, ZCC strived to guaranty a peaceful electoral environment in Zimbabwe.

Kenya Visit

To prepare for the 2023 Elections, a delegation of 11 ZCC personnel led by Rev W. Dimingu and Rev Dr. I. Makumbe visited Kenya between the 13th and 17th of March. The delegation visited institutions like the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC), the National Council of Churches in Kenya (NCCCK), and the Methodist Church in Kenya (MCK) to learn from the Kenya Church's best practices during the 2022 Kenyan presidential elections.

iPrayivote Campaign



Bishop Dr I. Makumbe, ZCC President launching the #iPrayivote campaign



Rev W. Dimingu, ZCC General Secretary during a Press Conference after launching the #iPrayivote campaign

In line with the best practices learnt during the Kenya visit, ZCC re-launched the #iPrayivote campaign in Harare. The event was running under the theme "Positioning the church in building a peaceful electoral environment". The campaign was originally launched in 2018 and has been running ever since. Its goal is to encourage citizens to vote and to advocate for peaceful elections. The Campaign's core premise is to identify elections as both a patriotic duty and an important ritual with Biblical precedence that all Christians have a duty to participate in. The campaign aims to encourage Zimbabwean Christians to vote and advocate for peaceful elections. The campaign targets Christian communities and the general public in Zimbabwe, increasing electoral awareness and mobilizing voters for peaceful participation in elections.

Voter Education

The ZCC placed a strong emphasis on voter education, recognizing that an informed electorate is crucial for the democratic process. ZCC has conducted several voter education campaigns using member church processes and social media platforms. One of the notable campaigns was conducted over Easter, reaching over 6,620 people nationwide. The church further reached over 2 million people through a multimedia awareness-raising and voter mobilization campaign rolled out on social media and radio platforms. The campaign used IEC materials such as flyers, jingles, and statements, aimed at educating and mobilizing Christians to participate in electoral processes and exercise their constitutional right to vote.

Political Dialogue Platforms



ZCC and AACC delegation, solidarity meeting with opposition President, Nelson Chamisa



ZCC and AACC delegation, solidarity meeting with President Emmerson Mnangagwa

The ZCC's efforts during the 2023 elections were guided by their commitment to promoting transparency, accountability, and the principles of democracy. The Church played an influential role in making sure that the political playing field was level and conducive for all players during the election season as it convened over 10 bilateral meetings with political parties, civil society organizations, and the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC). The meetings aimed to reflect on national peace during elections, with players amplifying calls for peace. Furthermore, ZCC facilitated alternative dialogue platforms on Twitter, hosting 12 Twitter space dialogues on issues such as political violence, rule of law, and peace.

Calls for Unity and Peace

Given the previous records of elections in Zimbabwe which were marred by violence and intimidation, ZCC in the spirit of fostering unity and peace was accompanied an eight-member delegation from the All Africa Council of Churches (AACC) who visited Zimbabwe to meet political layers including President Emmerson Mnangagwa, Nelson Chamisa and Civil Society Organisations (CSO) Chapter 12 Commissions and political parties. The calls for everlasting peace to prevail in the country during this post-election era despite the differences attributed to the election results.

Election Observers

Recognizing the importance of well-trained election observers, the ZCC also conducted training programs for individuals who were interested in monitoring the electoral process. These training sessions equipped participants with the necessary knowledge and skills to observe and report on any irregularities or violations that may have occurred during the elections.

The Zimbabwe Council of Churches was involved in election observing as early as January 2023. A total of 500 Long Term Observers were deployed in all the provinces to monitor the pre-election situation leading to the August 2023 harmonised elections. The observers shared daily, weekly and monthly reports, leading to the production of key evidence-based reports, such as the National PULSE reports, pastoral statements, and weekly news articles. A further 1200 Short Term Observers in all ten provinces specifically to monitor and observe the elections during the polling day. Additionally, external observers from the World Council of Churches, All Africa Council of Churches, and Council for World Mission provided support on the election days.



Ecumenical International Observers on the 23rd of August 2023 observing Zimbabwe's harmonized election

Post-Election

In a preliminary statement, ZCC described the 2023 Elections as generally peaceful but marred with constitutional and technical flaws, leading to polarization within the country. The Church is continuing to monitor and track cases of post elections violence and intimidation that have been happening in the country. ZCC reiterated its call for genuine inclusive national dialogue and has commenced engagements with key political players, including political parties, security sectors, and chapter 12 commissions.

The ZCC's involvement in the electoral process was widely recognized and appreciated by various stakeholders, including political parties, civil society organizations, and the general public. Looking ahead, the ZCC remains dedicated to its mission of promoting social justice, peace, and reconciliation in Zimbabwe. The organization will continue to advocate for the active participation of citizens in the democratic process and work towards building a society that upholds the values of transparency, accountability, and respect for human rights. Follow link to download Preliminary Statement and Post Election Statement: <https://zccinzim.org/resources/#>

Counting down to the 2023 Zimbabwe Alternative Mining Indaba



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days to go
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