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Mugabe's Presidency To Be Extended To 2010

By Staff Reporter

HARARE — The ruling Zanu PF government is widely expected to use its forthcoming congress to extend President Robert Mugabe's tenure as head of the party and endorse plans to have presidential and parliamentary elections being held at the same time in 2010.

The congress, set to be held in Goromonzi this month, will, according to sources in the party, seek to extend Mugabe's mandate to 2010 regardless of the fact that he had indicated he would be stepping down when his current term expired to write his memoirs.

"It looks like the President has had a change of heart and would actually want to stay on until 2010," one source told zimbabwejournalists.com. "At the moment he does not trust many people even from the party's top echelons and the only way he can protect himself and the few others the international community is trying to lynch as soon as he leaves office is to stay on."

She continued: "The international community has not been helping the Zimbabwean situation at all in the way they have been trying to scare him into submission or leaving office; incessantly talking about indictment and related issues—what do you expect when you are not certain of what the future holds. We have a crisis here and it's not going to be solved the way they want, maybe they should leave Zimbabweans alone for now so we can deal with our own problem. Truthfully speaking, there are no winners or losers in this crisis—we are all suffering."

She said the Zimbabwe government was apparently aware that there were many in the party "working clandestinely" with the international community, passing on information and promising to revert to the status quo where the minority whites owned massive tracts of land as opposed to peasant farmers living on infertile soils in squalid conditions. Mugabe has used the land sue to garner votes in disputed polls since 2000.

As if to confirm information from our sources, writing in his weekly column, Nathaniel Manheru, believed by many to be Mugabe's venomous spokesman, George Charamba, said Zimbabweans will in 2010 go to the polls to choose their president and members of parliament. Charamba/Manheru has over the past few years divulged information that has revealed Mugabe's government's true thinking and intended policies. He has contradicted and rubbished ministers and senior government officials in the column, the most famous being the withdrawn Kofi Annan invite over Operation Murambatsvina.

This Saturday he wrote: "When Zimbabweans go to the polls in 2010, polls to choose their president and members of parliament, our repining private media, the British and the Americans will have died from confounded predictions. That is my prediction. I mean these people—no—these institutions have built as many scenarios as they have cared to demolish. And each demolition opens the way for a new round of frenzied speculation, in fact installs a whole new generation of "knowing" speculators. It has become an obsession."

In the column titled "Succession: The chameleon vomits on chequered flag", he said Zanu PF had a lot to protect and so does its beneficiaries "whose interest in its continued governance far goes beyond loyalty or affiliation".

"Zanu (PF) has values, interests and a whole legacy to protect. Zanu (PF) has enemies to defeat: powerful enemies at that, all of them lurking in timeless urge for vengeance. It has heroes to protect; it has a history to defend. Zanu (PF) has continuity to guarantee. If you have received a piece of land and occupied it effectively for it to grow in you, you know what I am talking about. You will not lose it. Instead, you are ready to commit any crime in its defence. You know you have an interest in Zanu (PF)'s continued leadership, including that aspect of its leadership to do with presidency. The criteria for leadership is clear enough to you."

He also castigated some government ministers for cutting deals with former commercial farmers who had left the country following the bloody invasions of 2000.

"And a lot has been happening on the land front to expose politicians who wrap themselves in the national flag at daybreak, only to wipe their hinds with it before dusk gathers," the acerbic Manheru wrote. "Many we thought would lead us, have begun to repudiate the land revolution, in the process cutting or promising deals with whites. Of late, a handful of white farmers who left this land defeated and despondent at the height of land reforms, have started trickling back, many carrying promises they have been told will hatch in 2008."

Calling independent journalists "disturbed rabbits" in the way they have reported on the succession struggle in Zanu PF, Manheru said he hoped the Zanu PF congress in Goromonzi this month will "teach the media how to speculate knowledgeably and helpfully". He also revealed that Zanu PF had this year not invited the British and American ambassadors to their annual meeting. Party conferences and congresses are usually attended by members of the diplomatic corps and delegates from other countries.

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