

Zambia Cholera Update: Opposition UPND and Hakainde Suffering from Mental Cholera and Political Impotence!

By Mainda Simataa | General Secretary, ELA | Comment on the UPND's Impotence as an opposition Party | 9 January 2018 | Lusaka Zambia |

Facts on the Ground - Military deployed to fight street vendors, not Cholera!

A grave crime is being committed against millions of people trading-without-fixed-abode in the central trading area of the Cholera-besieged City of Lusaka, Zambia - the traders whom the rich and well-to-do often discriminate against and treat as lepers. These are the people whom upper-class and middle-class society denigrates, derides and brands as 'street vendors' and 'vagabonds'; as if being poor and filthy is entirely their fault, as if they were second-class citizens in our society, or worse still, as if they were children of a lesser God! The poor vendors and purveyors of assorted merchandise in Lusaka city; traders whom the ruling Patriotic Front (PF) government itself allowed and encouraged to trade freely in a town with no free toilets since 2011; all for political mileage, has today U-turned on them, and hunted and hounded them out of their trading stations like stray dogs infected with rabies.

The Poor Compounds on Lock-down - Church Gatherings in poor areas Suspended!

Under a draconian Presidential Statutory Instrument issued by Edgar Lungu (S.I 25), the entire military apparatus - Zambia Army, Zambia Airforce, Zambia National Service and Zambia Police Crack Squad battalions armed with Anatoloy Kalashnikov assault rifles (AK 47), teargas, pepper spray, truncheons, tazer guns, bullet-proof vests, and water cannons; have been mobilized in the 'cleaning' and clearing exercise! Make-shift stores and mobile containers have been smashed, the City is cleared, and the poor traders are not only angry, but hungry, and with no one to speak for them, not even the impotent opposition UPND! Clearly, the war on Cholera is simply a disguised war on the poor! The poor have been charged with the crime of 'producing', 'haboring', 'aiding' and 'distributing' Cholera in Lusaka. The poor traders have not only been chased from the city tradings spaces, but they have been followed up to their compounds were they have been told to stay until they are certified 'cholera free'.

An Impotent Opposition UPND looks on as injustice goes on!

In the face of all this injustice, one man and his party remains with arms folded, aloof, reserved...and may be even scared. This is certainly not the description of the kind of leader you would count on to win you an election against an increasingly dictatorial regime (PF)! But that is the fitting description of Hakainde Hichilema, leader of the

United Party for National Development (UPND), unchallenged leader and loser of the previous 5 elections (the last one having been stolen from him). But Hakainde's Party has ceased to look like a Party that can win, not since they lost the last election (August 2016), and Hakainde ended up being incarcerated in prison on trumped up treason charges! UPND has since transformed from a formidable opposition, to a feeble opposition, and now to a downright obstacle to the opposition and itself! The UPND's silence on the current suffering of the poor displaced traders is too loud to be ignored! UPND is definitely suffering from a hybrid form of Mental Cholera! They are inept and unfit to be a leading opposition party!

The core duty of any opposition Party and its leader is primarily to oppose the ruling Party; and in this case, to stand up and speak for the poor, to speak out against the injustice and class-war that is being waged against the poor in the name of fighting cholera; not to collaborate and have tea on a park bench with the ruling oppressors! That is why the opposition are referred to as opponents, not proponents. Unsurprisingly, the UPND has gone from being major to minor opposition in less than a year!

The Cholera has yet again tested the UPND's resolve and mettle as an opposition party; testing them if at all they are alive and capable of capitalizing on the short-comings of the ruling PF. Suffice to say, the UPND has failed lamentably as an opposition, again. In this latest Cholera tale that reveals the UPND leaders' detachment from the economic and social ramifications of the PF's recent and rash adhoc decision to smash and sever street vendors from their livelihoods, Hakainde and UPND have been the last to respond, and they have been shooting blanks in the wrong direction by donating 'keep Zambia Clean' Party branded dustbins! The UPND should do the Zambians a favor by dumping themselves in those dustbins!

One would have expected that someone like Hakainde, a savvy capitalist through and through, would immediately recognize that the displacement of street vendors has a negative socio-economic impact on the lives of the ordinary masses who form his widest prospective voter base, but no. Instead of launching a relentless criticism and campaign against the PF, the best that Hakainde and the UPND could think of was to jump into bed with the PF and join the mindless crusade against cholera!

It is quiet strange that a Political leader who prides himself as a seasoned 'economist', when in fact he is a cut-throat capitalist, he cannot see the dire economic effects that the displacement and banning of street vending will have on the masses. Women and widows are crying today about where they will get their next monies for rent, food, and school fees now that they have been put out of business by the so called pro-poor

government! But Hakainde and his UPND can only respond by praising the efforts of a party (PF) that is taking advantage of Cholera to profit from Cholera via corrupt cleaning contracts awarded to themselves!

The UPND is blind and unfit to lead, and whoever follows them will fal with them! Remember, this is the same Party that was banned from holding a rally in Kanyama not too long ago by PF authorities, all in the name of preventing the spread of cholera and they complied like mindless sheep! The fact of the matter is that the UPND is a dying Party, and if they are not careful, the tribal doom-Sayers prophecy that Hakainde will never rule Zambia just might come true, why? Because Hakainde and UPND lack initiative and political incisiveness to oppose the PF! The PF are digging their own graves, and the UPND is helping them out of the political grave of Cholera!

Those who hope for the removal of the PF must be very worried if they are placing their hopes on the UPND. UPND does not look and act like a Party that is serious for power, they have a laissez-faire approach to politics! They are like vultures that would rather wait for a wounded animal to die rather than finish off the kill! UPND is like a small briefcase organisation that speaks meekly and periodically about the problems of Zambia in fear of offending the ruling authority! Clearly, the inertia and political impotence of the UPND can only culminate into one thing - political extinction! 2021 is not guaranteed to them, but may very well be the end of them, and this serves them right!

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