

Chamisa meets Commonwealth delegation; gives damning report on Mnangagwa's human rights and reform record

NewZimbabwe by Leopold Munhende, Chief Correspondent

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CCC leader Nelson Chamisa

CITIZENS Coalition for Change (CCC) leader Nelson Chamisa met the visiting Commonwealth delegation Wednesday and highlighted the continued persecution of political opponents by President Emmerson Mnangagwa's government in a development that may dent its bid to re-join the 54-nation grouping.

Led by Assistant Secretary General Luis Franceschi, the Commonwealth team arrived in Zimbabwe last Saturday at the invitation of the Harare administration and has so far met government ministers, opposition political parties and civic society organisations.

Briefing journalists after meeting the delegation, Chamisa said, "We emphasised that Zimbabwe is in a state of illegitimacy, it is in a crisis was born out of disputed elections.

"... we noted that Zimbabwe is buffeted by a set of circumstances that have germinated acrimony, division, disputed national processes and outcomes, a disputed leadership, toxicity, the lack of legitimacy and this has essentially been the problem of Zimbabwe.

"We noted the absence of a genuine, inclusive and comprehensive dialogue in Zimbabwe. We made reference to the closure of democratic space and made emphasis that we are seeing an increase in the repressive tendencies and dictatorial tendencies of the incumbent government."

The CCC leader continued; "We made reference to the Private Voluntary Organisations (PVO) Bill, the Maintenance of Peace and Order Act (MOPA), the proposed Patriotic Bill and highlighted that the attack on CSOs in Zimbabwe is an alarming one including the targeting of HR defenders, trade unions, student movements, teachers, journalists, lawyers and some circumstances the church.



Opposition CCC leader Nelson Chamisa

“Politicians from different outfits have been targeted, those from the citizens movement the CCC have not been spared and we have seen that a number of them have been targeted, particularly the Mthwakazi Republic Party (MRP) activists who are incarcerated.”

He added: “What shocks us, and we shared this with the Commonwealth, is the inability and incapacity of the police, perhaps incapacitated by Zanu PF, they seem to have this inability to deal with challenges and incidences of incitement of violence especially by cabinet ministers.

“We have seen cabinet ministers making statements that incite violence, but nothing has been done to these individuals in government.”

Chamisa said he had shared details of legislators Job Sikhala and Godfrey Sithole’s arrest alongside 14 other CCC activists, highlighting how Zanu PF was weaponising the courts to punish dissent.

He also told the group about the killing of Mboneni Ncube, a CCC activist who was stabbed countless times at one of his rallies before the March 26 by-elections and abuse of traditional leaders by Zanu PF in rural areas.

“Zanu PF members continue to incite and perpetrate violence with reckless abandon, and this must be termed and arrested,” said Chamisa.

“On the electoral environment, we note the general lack of political will to implement a credible, inclusive and comprehensive electoral reform regime.

“The electoral environment has been marred by political violence, violation of the right to vote, refusal to implement the diaspora vote and we have made a point that there is no taxation without representation.

“We have seen the disruption and banning of our meetings and a violation of our freedom of association and freedom of assembly.



Jailed Opposition CCC legislator Job Sikhala

“On the economic front we underscored that 49% of Zimbabweans now live in deadening, extreme, abject poverty and highlighted that the general situation and hardship has escalated, the situation is now worse and there has been an escalation and suffering of the people particularly on account of bad governance, economic mismanagement, corruption and a disputed leadership.”

Chamisa, whose CCC is the only opposition political party so far entertained by the Commonwealth delegation, said recent visits by United Nations (UN) delegations and the Commonwealth indicated the country’s poor standing.

“The fact that we have the Commonwealth coming to Zimbabwe now, when hardly a few months ago we had the UN here and a number of delegations coming to Zimbabwe tells you that Zimbabwe is in a difficult situation,” he said.

“It is being treated as a sick country that has to come out of hospital and that sickness is supposed to be cured by all of us as citizens.

“We support everything that stands for and respects the constitution and the citizens of Zimbabwe. Our firm view is that Zimbabwe must normalise relations with all progressive forces, nations and global institutions including the Commonwealth in pursuit of mutual cooperation and national interest.

“Currently Zanu PF and bad politics are standing in the way of Zimbabwe being re-admitted into the Commonwealth.”

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