

Pressure piles over diaspora vote

NewsDay by Silas Nkala

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Chief Nhlanhlayamangwe Ndiweni

DETHRONED Ntabazinduna Chief Nhlanhlayamangwe Ndiweni recently said the 2023 elections outcome would be ruled illegitimate by the international community if the more than five million Zimbabweans in the diaspora are not allowed to vote.

Ndiweni's remarks came weeks after underfire Speaker of the National Assembly Jacob Mudenda called for the amendment to the electoral laws to allow for diaspora vote, prompting the ruling Zanu PF to hound the veteran politician.



Speaker of the National Assembly Jacob Mudenda

Zanu PF spokesperson Christopher Mutsvangwa last week said the Speaker had crossed the line.



Christopher Mutsvangwa

Government is under pressure from civic groups and opposition parties to allow diasporans to vote in next year's polls.

Ndiweni, who is the chairperson of *MyRight2Vote* pressure group, based in the United Kingdom, said holding an election without citizens based in foreign lands would render the outcome illegitimate.

"As a person who has been complaining about diaspora voting, this is a burning issue. It is a human right to be allowed to vote. About 5,5 million Zimbabweans in the diaspora have been denied their right to vote. To make things worse, this human right was promised during the war of liberation by Zanu PF, by Zapu," Ndiweni said.

"So, we have a deep historical basis for demanding this right because wherever we look, this right was given and it has been taken from the Zimbabwean populace in the diaspora. The population in the diaspora is nearly 50% of the voting population in Zimbabwe. This is a formidable percentage," he said.

"As *MyRight2Vote*, we are working very hard in preparation for the results night so that we put things in place to force the whole process to a standstill so that the diaspora vote is included," he added.

Soon after the disputed July 2018 harmonised elections, observer missions called on the government to facilitate postal voting for every Zimbabwean abroad as guaranteed under section 67 of the Constitution.

But the Zanu PF government has been evasive over the matter.

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