

Catholic bishops warn Zimbabwe 'doomed' if corruption left unchecked

ZimLive by staff reporter

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They criticise Mnangagwa third term push as a 'diversion from things that matter'



Pastoral letter ... Zimbabwe Catholic bishops meeting with the Pope at the Vatican in September 2023

HARARE – Catholic bishops have warned that Zimbabwe is “doomed” if authorities fail to arrest rampant corruption, while also urging the government to focus on “bread and butter issues” instead of the preoccupation with extending President Emmerson Mnangagwa’s term of office.

Rising poverty across the country is “not accidental,” the bishops said in a scorching March 3 pastoral letter, but a result of poor management of the country’s resources.

“We are all worried about the situation in the country,” the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops’ Conference said. “Politically, instead of focusing on bread and butter issues we are caught up in distractions such as the ‘third term’ conversations, something that has brought with it divisions and unnecessary diversions from the things that do matter.”

The bishops said Zimbabwe’s economy was “not faring well” adding: “Businesses are closing and many people are losing their jobs, and the few who are still lucky to be working are burdened under the regime of taxes.”

The bishops identified corruption as a stumbling block to Zimbabwe’s path to progress.

“Corruption is rampant and seems to be out of control. At the rate at which it is taking place, cutting through various sectors, the nation is doomed. One wonders why the corrupt seem uncensured and even rewarded whilst haemorrhaging the nation.”

The bishops noted a widening gap between the poor and the rich, which has deepened poverty.

“Few individuals seem to be benefitting from the wealth of the nation. We would like to remind our people that... poverty is not accidental, but a result of particular choices and systems.”

Institutions that perpetuate human suffering and injustice should be evaluated in relation to “their contributions to cultures that promote the common good,” the bishops said.

Zimbabwe needs to undergo a period of “conversion,” the bishops said, “one that begins with and goes beyond individual change to societal change that brings true freedom and shared national progress.”

The bishops’ conference is made up of seven Catholic bishops who head branches in Mutare, Harare, Hwange, Bulawayo, Gweru, Masvingo and Gokwe. Its current president is Reverend Paul Horan, bishop of the Mutare diocese.

Catholic bishops have been outspoken over Zimbabwe’s direction under Mnangagwa, who came to power through a military coup in 2017 promising political and economic reforms.

Mnangagwa’s government now stands accused of overseeing rampant corruption, rights abuses and economic mismanagement. A plan by his supporters to amend the constitution and extend his term beyond 2028 when his second and final term ends has drawn widespread condemnation.

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