

Mnangagwa praised, Hichilema condemned

SOCIALIST Party President Fred M'membe has congratulated Zimbabwe President Emmerson Mnangagwa and ZANU-PF on their election victory and criticised Zambia President Hakainde Hichilema for supporting an imperialist-backed puppet candidate.

"Our SADC region, and indeed our whole continent of Africa, can continue counting on you to advance efforts to defend our sovereignty, development interests and obtain justice and prosperity for our peoples," Dr M'membe told Mr Mnangagwa.

"We reject all attempts to judge Zimbabwe's elections by standards different from those used in other countries, on the Continent, and elsewhere.

"Nothing the imperialists, their agents and puppets can say and do, will take away your well-fought electoral victory.

"Our best wishes for peace and prosperity of Zimbabwe, while reiterating our unwavering commitment to continue strengthening the fraternal bonds of Pan-African solidarity and brotherhood that unite our peoples and their political organisations. You can count on our unwavering support and Pan-African solidarity."

Dr M'membe condemned Mr Hichilema's support for a puppet candidate and appointing Nevers Mumba, who broke with most other election observers, to fault the election. He described the events as "diplomatic blunders and embarrassments".

"The truth is, this particular SADC Election Observer Mission has been hijacked by Western imperialists, transnational corporations and Mr Hichilema's other foreign collaborators and



Socialist Party President Fred M'membe congratulates Emmerson Mnangagwa on his and ZANU-PF's Zimbabwe election victory

backers. They thought they could use their puppet – Mr Hichilema's current position in SADC – to install another puppet regime in Zimbabwe like they did in Zambia in 2021, but they have suffered a

humiliating defeat. We note with great concern and embarrassment, the dishonourable and subjective activities of Mr Nevers Mumba, who was appointed as the Head of the SADC Electoral Observa-

tion Mission to Zimbabwe by Mr Hakainde Hichilema, in his capacity as the current Chairperson of the SADC organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation.

"And so, this statement comes on the heels of reactions making rounds in the country and the SADC region, over the unprocedural, subjective and unprecedented conduct of Mr Hichilema's appointee, Mr Mumba, who has faulted the 2023 harmonised elections in Zimbabwe."

Dr M'membe said the Election Observer Missions presented their preliminary recommendations and conclusions, which were more or less similar, but that the SADC Electoral Observation Mission and EU Election Observer Mission's preliminary

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THE SOCIALIST PARTY stands for #realchange with policies based on justice, equity and peace. Manifesto/policies download details, and information about how to join the party are on our back page

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Police are being used to punish the opposition

Trumped-up charges, cases a waste of time and resources

Socialist staff reporter

SOCIALIST Party President Fred M'membe has condemned the use of the police to punish opposition politicians and has described his arrests and the court cases he attended where the prosecution wasn't ready to proceed as "a waste of time and resources".

Dr M'membe visited Balmoral Police Station in Chilanga to support Patriots for Economic Progress Party President Sean E. Tembo after police transferred him from Force Headquarters in Lusaka without notifying his lawyers or anyone else where they were taking him.

Dr M'membe said the police initially lied, saying they were taking Tembo to Kabwata, but transported him to Balmoral Police Station instead.

"To take Mr Tembo all the way

from Force Headquarters to Balmoral Police Station and a cell where he was alone is a mystery. What was the purpose? One day, these actions will backfire. One day, someone will die while in their hands and they will have difficulties explaining what happened," Dr M'membe said.

"Our simple advice is: desist from this conduct. The police can arrest people in a better way. There are right ways to do things. It is difficult to understand this behaviour, this police conduct.

"Why should the police lie to a suspect's lawyers, telling them they are taking their client from Force Headquarters to Kabwata and then taking him to Chilanga, far away, without notifying anyone. Nobody knew where he was.

"The police are increasingly being used to punish people. It is not the job of the police to punish. Punishment should only be carried out by courts of law after someone has been convicted.



Socialist Party President Fred M'membe speaks to the press on his way into Ibex Hill Police Station

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Zambia should sign up to BRICS

Yesterday's regime can't solve today's problems

ZAMBIA'S full participation in and commitment to BRICS is beneficial to the country, Socialist Party President Fred M'membe says.

BRICS, a grouping of world economies that comprised Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa until its summit last month when Argentina, Egypt, Ethiopia, the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia and Iran were accepted into membership, is seen as a counterweight to the G7 countries (Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom and the United States).

Speaking on Hot FM's The Hot Seat programme, Dr M'membe said BRICS offered an opportunity to deal with the challenges the world was facing.

He said there was growing inequality, unemployment, poverty and degradation of the environment which could not be addressed by the current world order because they were the ones who created the problems in the first place.

He said BRICS offered the chance to tackle vital challenges.

"Participation in BRICS is important. We are not encouraging division but we need to find universal solutions to humanity's problems that will create common prosperity and a peaceful world for all," he said.

Dr M'membe said the growing inequalities in the world had to be solved by a new world or-

der approach. "We are living in an increasingly changing world. The world cannot continue to be governed in the manner it used to be. There is growing inequality in the world despite huge production. There is poverty and damage to the environment that we depend on.

"This cannot be solved using the current world order because they created the problems. They have been meeting but they have failed to find solutions," he said.

Dr M'membe said organisations such as the World Bank were not created for poor countries like Zambia. There was a need for a system that supported African countries.

Dr M'membe said there had been attempts to reform institutions such as the World Bank, but those heading them were opposed to change.

He hailed plans by BRICS to set up a bank that would run parallel to the World Bank if it was well developed and successful.

He said most African countries were in a debt trap, adding that part of the BRICS effort was to have debts written off.

"It will offer our poor countries better opportunities to borrow on favourable terms and develop.

"It will benefit Zambia to be part of a new world order. BRICS offers the answers to new and rational ways of tackling the challenges," he said.

● New world order – P9



READING AND THE REVOLUTION

SOCIALIST Party Zambia would like to thank the socialist print media Ukombozi Library from Kenya for donating books to SP Zambia Popular Library, which will help promote the reading culture in our country.

Socialist Party Fred M'membe, who heads the party's outreach literacy campaign, is on record as saying that the ability to read

and write is top of the agenda of the incoming socialist government. "Under the socialist government, everyone will be provided with an opportunity to learn to read and write. The literacy campaign started by the party in June 2018 in Lusaka will be extended to cover the whole country. Illiteracy will be completely eradicated within 10 years," he said.

People don't care about political persecutions

SOCIALIST Party President Fred M'membe says the Zambian people aren't interested in seeing opposition leaders being pursued on flimsy grounds and would rather have food on their tables.

Speaking on the Hot FM's Hot Seat programme, Dr M'membe said the most important thing was to improve the living conditions of the people and not make dubious arrests.

He said that when governments have difficulties governing, delivering, and explaining themselves, history has shown that increasingly they turn to oppression.

Dr M'membe, who has been detained twice in the last month, questioned whether his arrests have reduced the price of mealie meal.

"The mocking of politicians does not matter. It only matters if it changes the living conditions of our people. Me being arrested

does not change anything. I have been arrested, have the living conditions of the people changed? Has the price of mealie meal gone down? Has the price of fuel and fertiliser gone down? The issues I have been arrested over are in the public domain, they are very well known. People can judge for themselves. The recent arrest over shooting someone is the most ridiculous a regime can try to do. Was Kenneth Kaunda a criminal? Even Rupiah Banda went to prison. Was he a criminal? HH went to prison, was he a criminal? We know the police are under pressure. They don't care wherever I am acquitted or not. What they care about is the inconvenience caused," he said.

Dr M'membe said it was not about what leaders said they have achieved, but how the people feel.

"People are looking for a better life. They

want to live better with their generation. They want to go to bed at night not worrying what they are going to eat tomorrow. But they go to bed without having eaten. We are losing a lot of people due to stress. It's not easy," he said.

Dr M'membe said the Socialist Party was seeking a radical change in the way the country was governed – there was a need to increase people's participation in governance issues.

He said Zambia was being governed by politicians some of whom were crooked and amassed wealth in the shortest period of time.

"Leaders lead, people govern. We don't seem to learn. Who can get us out of this? We need to broaden people's perception. Only the people can change this by working together. What is the role of our religious leaders in the governance of our country? Religious leaders are the best leaders for families, politicians are the worst," he said.

Families face a crisis because of 'cheating' wage theft

PRESIDENT Hakainde Hichilema and his "corrupt, far-right UPND puppet regime" must urgently attend to the incidences of wage theft for local government and council workers, Socialist Party President Fred M'membe says.

"The recent clash where Lusaka City Council workers were kept for four months without pay confirms the magnitude of wage theft and its consequences for the affected workers and their families," he said in a Facebook post.

"This government must not take advantage of the scarcity of well-paying jobs in the country today and deliberately resort to the exploitation of workers such as we are

witnessing in our local government system. Sadly, all this is happening as the politicians serving in this government are earning exorbitant salaries while trying to cheat their way out by citing the economy as the main contributor to their inability to pay workers a decent wage on time."

Dr M'membe said the situation could not be allowed to continue.

"Workers' rights cannot continue to be violated with no decisive state intervention. It is the duty of Mr Hichilema and his government to protect the interests of council workers countrywide and ensure that a decent wage is paid on time, especially under the trying economic circumstances that this very

government has subjected our people to. We cannot have a situation where wages and benefits are never remitted on time. Most of these workers have gone for many months without receiving their monthly salaries yet are expected to report for work as if everything is normal.

"Non-payment of wages is a very serious problem and this government should not be self-satisfied about tackling this issue. A lot is at stake and there is no room for laxity.

"Mr Hichilema and his corrupt, puppet regime should know that failure to remit monthly wages contributes to the disintegration of the family system due to high poverty levels, leading to starvation and squalor.

"Let them know that wage theft is impoverishing many workers and making once decent families resort to formulating desperate coping strategies to make ends meet, which in the long-run ends up destroying families irretrievably.

"Further, wage theft is largely responsible for the social crisis many families face in the country today, particularly as it takes away dignity and self-respect from the workers.

"Without doubt, inability to support the family brings shame, humiliation and in extreme cases depression or even death. And so, this government must attend to the plight of the suffering majority of the workers of this country," Dr M'membe said.

Price reviews fuel the flames of discontent

THE MONTHLY fuel price reviews may be fine in principle, but they assume a rational response from all stakeholders, Socialist Party President Fred M'membe said in a Facebook post.

"They assume that pump prices will be increased proportionally when supply prices are increased and vice versa. The downside, however, is that pump prices are proportionally increased when a supply hike happens

but the reverse does not follow. When supply prices are reduced, most businesses retain the revised hiked pump prices.

"The consumer is continuously bearing the brunt of price hikes. It makes planning for businesses very cumbersome as they have to adjust prices every month.

"Please abandon the monthly price reviews and revert to the old system. It's too complex for a country like Zambia," he said.

Either there are enough police or there aren't

WE EXPECTED Mr Hakainde Hichilema to perform better than the PF on the Public Order Act knowing where he is coming from, what he went through, what he was subjected to, Socialist Party President Fred M'membe says.

"But it seems all his opposition to the abuse of the Act was not out of a principled belief in the fundamental freedoms of assembly, expression, speech and association,

but very narrow personal power interests. "How else can one explain the obstacles being today placed in the way of the PF to hold a rally in Lusaka's Zingalume?"

"The police declined the PF's request, or rather notice, to hold a rally in Zingalume, citing a lack of manpower. But after the cancellation there was a high police presence in Zingalume. Where did it come from? What is Mr Hichilema scared of? Lesa tashentekwa!

Congratulations to Mnangagwa

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statements were "a poorly executed desk job".

"We say so because the footprints of connivance and deliberate collective intention by the SADC and the EU Election Observer Missions to try to discredit and tarnish the ZANU-PF electoral victory are noticeable.

"In fact, in certain passages of the statements, the similarities in language and phraseology vividly bring to light and prove the malice, dishonest and contemptuous intent of the SADC and EU Election Observer Missions.

"And it doesn't require much to see that the planners of the two documents were the same. The mischief is indisputably evident. This was a prearranged conclusion and the SADC and EU Election Observer Missions ought to be ashamed of this.

"But this doesn't come as a surprise to us. It doesn't amaze us at all that such a first-time diplomatic humiliation for Zambia and SADC is happening under Mr Hichilema's leadership. In fact, we pin this illogical, recklessly ambitious and ignorant diplomatic miscalculation on Mr Hichilema's puppetry and unbridled desire to impress transnational corporations and his Western imperialist masters."

State House connection to gold gate ‘vindicates our warning’

Security officer in court over reported US\$5m missing from aircraft at KKIA

Socialist staff reporter

THE APPEARANCE of a State House security officer at Lusaka Magistrates’ Court over the gold gate scandal has vindicated our warning about the activities of people close to Mr Hakainde Hichilema, Socialist Party President Fred M’membe says.

State House security officer Francis Mateyo appeared in court alongside other accused persons over the gold gate scandal – the incident in which approximately US\$ 5 million was reported to be missing from a grounded private aircraft at Kenneth Kaunda International Airport (KKIA) last month.

“Mr Mateyo is one of the UPND cadres who were encrypted into the State House security after Mr Hakainde Hichilema took over office as Head of State,” Dr M’membe said.

“Mr Mateyo is believed to be a loyalist and a very close, very trusted, and strong ally of the Mr Hichilema, right from his days as an opposition leader.

“When we first picked up intelligence about the gold gate scandal at KKIA and the alleged involvement of Mr Mateyo, we immediately raised the alarm and advised that it was vital for Mr Hichilema to control the evil, disgraceful, and morally objectionable activities being peddled by certain identifiable individuals within State House.

“Regrettably, our well-intentioned counsel was met with the habitual vicious and malicious attack against us. Even the government officially rubbished the alarm we had raised and called a bluff against us. We were denounced and insulted by Mr Hichilema’s State House controlled rogue or guerrilla media channels – Koswe and Zambia Watchdog.

“Our offence was simple. We exposed what had become a very

serious and real crime involving one of their own. It’s clear they never wanted the truth about what happened at KKIA to be known. They were determined to put a lid on it and pretend like nothing happened.

“This explains why even Mr Mateyo’s capture was hidden from the public until he was aligned before the courts. The DEC and other law enforcement agencies went to town posturing and parading other suspects with the exception of Mr Mateyo, why?

“The question is: why have things been handled this way? Did they think the gold gate scandal was going to remain hidden from the public? What was the purpose of that arrogance, insults and hostility towards us? With all that has been offloaded so far and many questions still hovering around Mr Hichilema over this scandal, how will the Zambian people believe that justice will be served in this matter and the real culprits brought to book?

“And now that it’s obvious that they’re trapped and embarrassed

about the way things have turned out; the only words left for Mr Hichilema and his praise singers at this moment is: “You’re on your own”.

“But hang on! Not so fast. What has changed? It’s people like Mr Mateyo we cautioned Mr Hichilema about. It’s these same people they sat, drank and ate with, not so long ago. No wonder, they were so relentless in trying to insult and threaten those who dared to speak the truth about the gold gate scandal. But now that things have gone sour and getting worse rapidly, they shamelessly want to wash their hands of their man.

“Clearly, those linked or who are close to Mr Hichilema can only be ‘on their own’ once caught, if not caught, they remain trusted and loyal companions of Mr Hichilema and his league. What a mistake. What hypocrisy. What kind of corrupt leadership is this?

“Now they are ashamed be-

cause one of them has been mentioned in this mess. They are ashamed and speechless because they, too, have been caught in their own lies, denials, deception and manipulation.

“We have not forgotten how haphazard press briefings were called and all manner of lies and theories were made to defend and justify the gold gate scandal, and distance State House from it.

“Within hours of the scandal blowing up, we saw how the Minister of Mines, Mr Paul Kibuswe, became a minerals expert and talked down all critical voices, including myself, with grandiosity and contempt. Similarly, we saw how the Minister of Home Affairs and Internal Security, Mr Jack Mwiimbu, warned politicians against scandalising the Presidency and State House over the gold gate scandal.

“So, now that the dirt is out, what has Mr Hichilema, Mr Mwiimbu, and Mr Kibuswe got to say about the gold gate scandal? Mr Kibuswe called us foolish. But

we ask the same question he asked us during his press briefing at that time: who is looking foolish now?

“Well, we have been vindicated. We said it there was way too much filth and scum in State House. We warned Mr Hichilema but the response was the usual malice and insults. As the Tongas say: “Yabija makani baasa”, and the Bembas also say: “Ifyakulya ubushiku fitulila ku malushi”.

“But where does this end? Who else is involved? How many ‘Mateyos’ is Mr Hichilema still working with in State House today? How deeply involved is State House in this scandal?

“That said, we hope Mr Hichilema is treating the Anti-Corruption Commission’s US\$500,000 bribe investigation against his Solicitor General, and trusted lieutenant and ally, Mr Marshal Muchende, who stands accused of running a bribery scheme, with objectivity and urgency, or else, a similar outcome awaits him,” Dr M’membe said.

● Bribery probe silence – P5



There is a desperate plan to slow down our momentum

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“Where is the presumption of innocence until proven guilty? We have warned that the attempt to use the police to fix political opponents will not work. It will not solve any problem; it will actually create more problems.

“Mr Tembo was arrested last year and detained for many days. To date, none of those issues have been taken to court. Ambassador Mwamba was arrested, abducted, treated in the most barbaric way, assaulted actually, and to date he has not been taken to court.

“This is what happens when professionalism, values, and principles are lost or are sacrificed on the altar of political or career expediency.

“There is no need for this misplaced and childlike zeal and excitement from the Zambia Police Service high command.

“As an essential part of our state security apparatus, they are expected to be non-partisan and defend the Constitution as well as the interests of the police officers and staff

under their command. So let the Zambia Police Service high command sober up and preside over the affairs of our police service with maturity and impartiality.”

Dr M’membe was given the run around himself last month, instructed to attend two court appearances where the prosecution either said they weren’t ready to proceed with the case or didn’t turn up to court at all.

He faces three separate charges:

- The offence of libel Contrary to Section 191 CAP 87 of the Laws of Zambia, with the State claiming he defamed Deputy Inspector General of Police for Operations, Milner Muyambango, in a Facebook post,
- Charged with the offence of Communication of Certain Information contrary to Section 4 Subsection 4 of the State Security Act Chapter 111 of the laws of Zambia, and,
- Charged with Assault Occasioning Actual Bodily Harm after discharging his pistol during an attack by UPND cadres at an ECZ authorised and scheduled election campaign meeting in Serenje four months ago. He is alleged to have caused a head injury, but Dr M’membe said he shot into

the air to scare away the attackers and that no one was injured.

Dr M’membe was detained in the cells overnight at Woodlands Police Station over the libel allegation before being freed on police bond.

He was then summoned to Ibex Hill Police Station for questioning over the shooting allegation where police barricaded access roads to prevent his supporters from showing solidarity.

Intimidate

Two appearances at court; one on the charge of libel and the second on the charge of the Communication of Certain Information were adjourned because state prosecutors either said they were not ready to proceed or the case was not listed to be heard, even though he had been ordered to appear in court.

Dr M’membe said trumped-up charges and repeated police call-outs were designed to try to intimidate him and the Socialist Party, but were a waste of time and resources.

“The turn of events is a sheer waste of time and resources. They said they were ready but they are nowhere near it. Why are they wasting everybody’s time? Why arrest someone when you are not ready to prosecute them?

“There is a desperate plan by Mr Hichilema to slap me with trumped-up charges in the hope that he slows down our momentum. But this will not work,” he said.

“Our people have seen through this one-term puppet regime’s corrupt and divisive rhetoric and have resolved to correct the mistake they made in the last general election.

“Even Mr Hichilema and the masters who control him know that we not only support our people, but that more and more of our people, especially the poor masses, heavily support us too.

“This is why Mr Hichilema and his league are desperate and willing to practise autocracy while preaching democracy. But we fully understand what is happening to them and how this unstoppable

mass movement of the people affects them,” he said.

Dr M’membe said Mr Hichilema and the police acting on his orders could not intimidate him. “Intimidation cannot work on some of us. I have been in many struggles, which Mr Hichilema has never been in.

“I want to remind Mr Hichilema that the blood of a Bemba warrior runs through me. It gives me the courage,

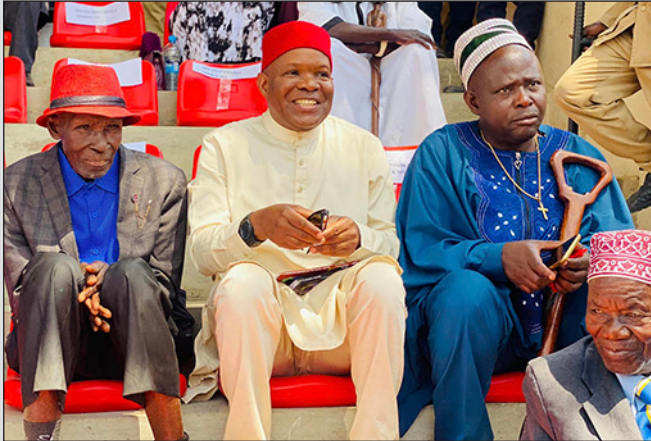
“I also want to remind Mr Hichilema that the wisdom of the Lozis runs through my blood. A combination of Lozi wisdom and Bemba courage is not something he can conquer.”

And he said the charges, court cases and repeated police call-outs would not affect the fight for justice, equality and peace and against imperialist puppets.

“Our people have suffered indignity and injustice from imperialists and their puppet regimes, such as the one governing our country today, for far too long.

“One bad term doesn’t deserve another, aleya!”

TRADITIONAL CEREMONIES



Our leaders must work together

THERE is a need for all of Zambia's leaders to work together if the country is to move forward, Socialist Party President Fred M'membe says.

Dr M'membe was speaking to the media outside St John's Cathedral in the Archdiocese of Kasama, where he had attended mass along with Paramount Chief, Mwinelubemba Chitimukulu Kanyanta-Manga II, and His Majesty the Litunga of Barotseland, Lubosi Imwiko II, in Mungwi district.

"Two of our traditional leaders are meeting in the same Catholic church," he said. "There is a need for traditional leaders, religious leaders and the political leadership to work together to share the responsibility, share the power that is there, share the weight that is there in a manner that is fair and just."

"Without that, we are not going anywhere; we'll be marching backwards with very long strides," he said.

"Politicians alone cannot manage to take the people out of the poverty they are in, out of the many problems that they are facing today."

"For 60 years this country has been ruled by politicians, and the problems are deepening."



After the Mass at St John's Cathedral, Archdiocese of Kasama. Socialist Party President Fred M'membe (second left) with Mwinelubemba Chitimukulu Kanyanta-Manga II and His Majesty the Litunga of Barotseland Lubosi Imwiko II

"There is a need to realise that politicians are not the only leaders; there are other leaders. And these are the traditional and religious leaders. They also need to play a role in the running of our country."

The following day, Dr M'membe attended a ceremony by Bemba traditional leaders to celebrate ten years of His Royal Highness Paramount Chief Mwinelubemba Chitimukulu Kanyanta Manga II on the throne.

The leaders gathered in Mungwi district, Northern Province, with the celebrations taking place in Ng'wena Arena.

Dr M'membe watched on as celebrations and other activities took place, including the Ukusefya Pang'wena Traditional Ceremony, and met with traditional leaders. He also took time to visit and chat with Human Rights Commission officers at their Ng'wena Arena stand.

The Chitimukulu is the king or para-



mount chief of the Bemba, the largest ethnic group in Zambia. All Chitimukulus, as well as lesser Bemba chiefs, are members of the Bena Ngayandu (Crocodile Clan). Potential successors to the ruling Chitimukulu are chosen from the various Bemba chiefs.

The king's title comes from the first recorded Chitimukulu, who was originally named Chiti Muluba, but changed his name to Chiti Mukulu (Chiti the Great).

In the 18th century, he led the Bemba out from their original lands in the Luba Empire of Mukulumbe in what is now the Democratic Republic of Congo to eventually settle around Kasama.

The original Bemba kings are said to have been descendants of King Mukulumbe and his last wife Mumbi Mukasa, who belonged to the Crocodile Clan. Together, they had four children: Katongo, Nkole, Chiti and Chilufya Mulenga.

The Bemba were given a kingdom to rule by their father. According to legend, they then built a tower to help them see approaching enemies from a distance, but the tower collapsed, causing several deaths.

The Bemba leaders were called by their father to establish their innocence, but in the end their elder brother was arrested and blinded to send a message to his siblings.

Legend has it that after the Bemba leaders saw the cruelty of their father, they decided to leave and settle wherever they found a dead crocodile as a sign.

After years of wandering in Zambia, the Bemba settled in Mungwi district, having found a dead crocodile there.

The first Chitimukulu to settle in Lubemba was Chilufya Mulenga.

Kunda royals protest over UPND cadres' violence



The Kunda Royal Establishment has expressed "its deep disappointment and anguish" at the violent behaviour and insults by known UPND cadres at its just ended Malaila traditional ceremony in Mambwe district, Eastern Province.

The ceremony, which was held on August 19 at Luwaneni in Mnkanya Chiefdom, was disrupted by violence and insults by the cadres, who were protesting the presence of former President, Dr Edgar Lungu at the ceremony.

The House of Chiefs Chairperson, His Royal Highness Chief Chisunka, said, "Traditional leaders are non-partisan, and traditional ceremonies are not political gatherings, but rather celebrations and the preservation of our history and culture. It should be known by every Zambian that culture is

not just our identity, rather it also unites us and it's a means through which we all come together to solve Malambo's most pressing challenges, and build sustainable communities."

The Kunda Royal Establishment said, "We echo the sentiments of the Chairperson of the House of Chiefs. We are saddened at the blatant disrespect directed at His Royal Highness Senior Chief Nsefu, his chiefs and subjects."

"It is evident that the people who were at the forefront of this mayhem are people who do not regard our national values and Kunda culture, nor its leaders and people."

"We are of the view that anyone is free to attend a traditional ceremony, which usually attracts people from all walks of life and from across the

globe, as it creates opportunities to bring our communities together to experience the diverse cultures and foster unity, development, and social change."

"We are of the considered view that this mayhem was perpetrated by members of the United Party for National Development - UPND - as we have video footage which clearly shows Mambwe District Commissioner Mr William Banda pushing and shoving police officers in uniform, creating a scene in the presence of the Kunda chiefs and the Chairperson of the House of Chiefs. It is sad to witness a son of Kunda land being at the centre of trying to disgrace our rich Kunda heritage."

"The Kunda Royal Establishment wishes to place it on record that on August 1, 2023,

we wrote to the provincial administration to transfer the DC, Mr W Banda from Mambwe district due to his hostile and repeated disrespectful behaviour toward traditional leaders in the district."

"His conduct is a hindrance to development and we cannot stand by and watch him contribute to the stagnation of our beautiful district."

"We, as the Kunda Royal Establishment, stand for peace, and embrace other people across the political divide. We have always embraced and worked with the government of the day, and the government of His Excellency Mr Hakainde Hichilema is no exception."

"Let's foster an environment of mutual respect and peace, and it is in this atmosphere that we will prosper as a district and a nation at large."



Socialist Party President
Fred M'membe at Lusaka
Magistrates Court

Hichilema had no plan to fix Zambia. It was rhetoric

WHAT'S the problem with KCM and Mopani? What's troubling Mr Hichilema's government? We would like to remind them that the delayed capitalisation of the two mining operations has been and is too painful for Zambia, especially for the residents of the Copperbelt Province.

Statements to the effect that the delay is "because the government wants to safeguard the interests of Zambians" are hollow and deceitful because it is clear that Mr Hichilema and the UPND had no plan to "fix" any challenges Zambia was facing before they were elected, and now the problems have grown bigger.

On KCM, the trouble is that Vedanta has spent money and promised to be given back the mine based on agreed terms, including some Key Performance Indicators that Mr Hichilema's government has included in the draft agreement.

The Key Performance Indicators include the following:

1. An investment of more than US\$1 billion to develop KDMP,
2. Salary and wage increments for KCM staff,
3. Assume and pay-off debts owing to suppliers and contractors to KCM. These will be mainly debts incurred by the Provisional Liquidator and may be upwards of US\$300 million, excluding the electricity bill.

Should the Key Performance Indicators not be met, Vedanta will be compelled to offer its shares in KCM to ZCCM IH at a price. It would appear it is the asking price from Vedanta that might now be delaying the conclusion of the deal.

Vedanta is asking for upwards of US\$2.75 billion should the government invoke the Article to take over the mines if Vedanta fails to attain certain Key Performance Indicators.

It is incomprehensible that such an Article would even be considered because one wonders what measures have been put in place to safeguard GRZ/ZCCM IH/ and the people of Zambia, who are the ultimate beneficial shareholders in ZCCM IH, from Vedanta should Vedanta deliberately underperform so that ZCCM IH triggers the Articles for the Vedanta shares to be sold to ZCCM IH in the name of not meeting KPIs for Vedanta to automatically be owed \$2.75 billion by ZCCM IH.

Should this information we have be true, then this imminent deal between Mr Hichilema's government will surpass the Lungu government's US\$1.5 billion deal with Glencore over Mopani.

Noticeably, there is something fishy about this deal and it can only be because Vedanta may have parted with some money to allow for such a bad deal against Zambians to be tabled for finalisation.

It cannot be wrong to assume that this deal might have an upside for some government officials pulling strings to make it happen. Your guess is as good as mine as to what level such deals are given the go-ahead.

As for Mopani Copper Mine, it appears that after almost concluding with a Chinese group, the government has reopened the bid process by allowing a possible last-minute entry to be considered for its acquisition.

Whatever the reasons, it is now two years since Mr Hichilema was elected into office to manage Zambia with the promise that "Bally will fix it". It appears Mr Hichilema either underestimated the challenges Zambia is and has been facing, or it might be that "Bally" had no plan even after being given 16 years to prepare for the job.

Indonesia sets an example

NO MATTER how many new mines we allow transnational corporations to open and how much they increase mineral production, we will not get much out of it and move our people out of poverty.

We need to learn something from what Indonesia has done with its minerals. They used to earn just over a billion dollars a year exporting iron as an unprocessed commodity but they stopped, and started producing stainless steel. And today, Indonesia is earning billions from these value additions. But those who were benefiting from commodity exports and exploitation are not happy with them and are relentlessly fighting them.

We have been mining and exporting unpro-

cessed minerals since the early 1900s with Cecil John Rhodes and his British South Africa Company and later Oppenheimer and his Anglo American Corporation but we have gotten very little, if not nothing, from it.

Similarly, we can do the same thing Indonesia has done with our 2,400 metric tonnes of Cobalt, albeit a poor second to the Democratic Republic of Congo's 24,000 metric tonnes production per year. We can do the same with our emeralds, nickel, uranium, etc.

And most of our North Western Province gold should be mined for the government stock of gold reserves. There should be very little, or no, exports of gold. With increased earnings from these value additions to our minerals we can be in a better position to tackle our youth unemployment of around 7.5 million by pumping some of these increased earnings into agriculture.

Today, we have no less than 12 farming blocks, each of around 100,000 hectares of arable land laughing at us. We need only to determine the investment requirements for what we need locally and what the regions around us require over 10 years. And we shouldn't bother about exporting to Europe; we should instead focus on our neighbours within Africa. And there's need for us to reduce or stop the importation of foodstuffs we are consuming but not producing. We should as far as possible eat only what we grow and prioritise the growing of what we need to eat.

If we consistently, tenaciously, and resolutely do this, Zambians should be able to see a huge reversal of fortunes in less than 15 years. We have no sensible alternative to this.

It's all a boomerang of lies

MR HAKAINDHE Hichilema and the UPND have now clocked two years since they were voted into office.

The test here is simple: just walk to the nearest shop or supermarket and check the current price of mealie meal.

Compare that to the price before Mr Hichilema was elected into office. The answer you get will tell you whether or not you wasted your vote.

Are you not surprised how the UPND can be so dead silent on its anniversary? Tafili bwino, nafipena! It knows that fact as well and is lost for words and lies to justify its incompetence.

The truth is, for the last two years Mr Hichilema and his "champion's league" government have been "methodically" pushing this country and its citizens into poverty and starvation.

The leadership failure of this regime is not just a matter of political ideology or policy but also a boomerang of lies, deceit and manipulation. It has been caught and stands exposed in humiliation and shame.

If two years of Mr Hichilema's corrupt, puppetry leadership is this bad, how will five years be?

Ba Zambia mwali yi gong'a.

The road to hell or change?

NOT SO long ago, Defence Minister Ambrose Lufuma featured on ZNBC boasting about exporting mealie meal and noted that it was contributing to the rising price of mealie. And then, Mr Cornelius Mweetwa, featuring on Diamond TV, told the nation that the government was concerned about the escalating price of mealie meal. Really, what is going on?

Clearly we have a problem. These people are not straight and are taking us nowhere but to hell. We need change.

Zambia, join us. Rally behind the Socialist Party for a better country. We deserve better. We are ready to lead.

China a socialist success

SOCIALISM with Chinese characteristics is socialism. It is not any other sort of "ism". The foundational, scientific principles of socialism cannot be abandoned; only if they were abandoned would our system no longer be socialist. From first to the last our party has emphasised that socialism with Chinese characteristics adheres to the basic principles of scientific socialism and is imbued with characteristically Chinese features bestow by the conditions of the times. — Xi Jinping

The Chinese leadership has always been very clear that its political and economic system is socialism. To those who talk about the failure of socialism, can you say China is a failure?

Silence and bid to block bribery probe is suspect

Hichilema's 'self-interest' over SG

PRESIDENT Hakainde Hichilema and his regime's silence and attempts to block the Anti-Corruption Commission's bribery investigation into Solicitor General Mr Marshal Muchende signifies an outrageous act of blatant self-interest, Socialist Party President Fred M'membe says.

"We are aware that the ACC has placed a restriction order on the property believed to belong to Mr Muchende over allegations that the Solicitor General received a sum of more than US\$ 500,000 as a bribe — and much more — from a named former liquidator," he said in a Facebook post.

"We are also reliably informed about the frantic attempts from State House to get the restriction order lifted and the investigations into Mr Muchende's alleged involvement in corruption thwarted or frustrated.

"We want to address Mr Hichilema directly on this matter that we strongly feel falls right on his feet as the appointing authority, to enable Zambians to understand and know the whole truth."

Dr M'membe said it was necessary to ask the following questions to help establish the facts:

- Why is there panic and desperation in State House over Mr Muchende's investigation?
- Who is Mr Muchende to Mr

Hichilema? What is their relationship?

- What past business/political or other dealings have Mr Hichilema and Mr Muchende done together?
- Since there is a traceable history between the two, isn't Mr Hichilema compromised in this matter?

"We raise the questions above as a way of reminding this corrupt regime, and Mr Hichilema in particular, that his continued silence on this matter is eroding the people's trust and confidence in the country's justice system.

"Mr Hichilema must know that the Office of Solicitor General plays a critical role in shaping the country's legal ethos and prosecutorial system and therefore, people cannot have faith and trust in the justice system when the current occupant of this office — Mr Muchende — stands accused of running a bribery scheme.

Urgent

"We know what is going on with Mr Muchende's matter and we would like to reiterate our call to Mr Hichilema, and certain identifiable key advisors within the presidential advisory team, to step aside and let the ACC do its job independently by ensuring that the investigation continues as planned.

"Let Mr Hichilema come clean on his relationship with Mr Muchende and assure the country that there will be no interference in this investigation. And this has to be done urgently to save the little

that is remaining of this regime. Creating networks and schemes to protect and defend Mr Muchende will not work.

"Zambians are alert and watching," he said.

Questions for Mr Muchende

SOLICITOR General Mr Marshal Muchende, who stands accused of running a bribery scheme and is currently being investigated by the Anti-corruption Commission (ACC), can afford to be this arrogant and pompous over such serious matters because he knows where his protection lies, Socialist President Fred M'membe writes.

"The Bembas say: 'Mumbwe pakulila ninshi pali eko ashin-tillile'.

"And so, Mr Muchende's arrogance and lack of respect towards our concerns vindicates our desire for Mr Hichilema to come clean on this issue.

"Mr Muchende must know that the allegations against him are serious and it's not a matter of who is above or below the other, or how the information of his investigation reached us. Our questions to him are simple: ● Did Mr Muchende receive the US \$500,000 bribe or not? ● Why has ACC placed a restriction order on a property believed to be his? ● Does he still feel his continued stay in the Office of Solicitor General amidst such serious allegations gives people trust and confidence in our country's justice system? ● What relationship does he share with Mr Hichilema?

Mealie meal shortages, high prices are a security risk

WHY ARE Mr Hakainde Hichilema and his league gambling with mealie meal? Why are they changing policy every day? Does this government know what it is doing? Socialist Party President Fred M'membe asks.

"This country currently faces serious mealie meal challenges, which have resulted in shortages of nshima in many households," Dr M'membe said in a Facebook post. "People are desperately seeking solutions to these challenges but all this government can do is fidget or mess around with mealie meal supply and pricing policy in an irresponsible fashion.

"Will this leadership ever be serious enough to take care of the numerous problems our people face? This is the highest form of recklessness and sheer incompetence.

"Looking at the indecision, clumsiness, lack of patriotism and love for the people exhibited by Mr Hichilema so far, it is correct for us prepare Zambians to expect the worst because this government has failed to navigate the mealie meal challenges and ultimately guarantee stable national food security and sovereignty.

"The Zambian people must know that the underlying cause of these unstable and high mealie meal prices is Mr Hichilema's ex-

cessive loyalty to commercial interests and profits at the expense of starving Zambians. This is typical of far-right governments and leaders, including Mr Hichilema.

"We want to repeat the counsel we offered him last month that he must be extremely cautious with the manner in which he is handling the mealie meal situation.

"History has shown that the poor have never been friendly in their response to high food prices. When their lives and wellbeing are threatened due to unaffordable food prices, the poor have always sought solutions in their own way. But there is no need to tempt people to reach such desperate levels," Dr M'membe said.

"Let this government acknowledge that its failure to manage mealie meal supply and prices poses a serious security risk both in the short and long term. Let it prioritise the supply chain and ensure that mealie meal pricing is affordable and consistent. It must guarantee food security for every household in the country, thereby creating a cohesive society.

"The writing on the wall is so clear: Mr Hichilema and his corrupt puppet regime have failed.

"One bad term doesn't deserve another, aleya!"

Maize cost is the key:

I HAVE heard so many pronouncements about how mealie prices will stabilise due to potential higher maize production in the next farming season arising from increased maize prices paid to farmers, which is expected to incentivise them to grow more maize in 2023/2024 season.

The point that is being missed is that prevailing high mealie meal prices are not a function of supply and demand. The prices are driven by high production costs for millers to produce mealie meal because of the increasing price of maize. So even if the production of maize grown by farmers is doubled, the cost of production will remain the same as long as the maize prices paid to farmers remain the same.

To reduce the price of mealie meal, we need interventions across production that address both farmers and millers.

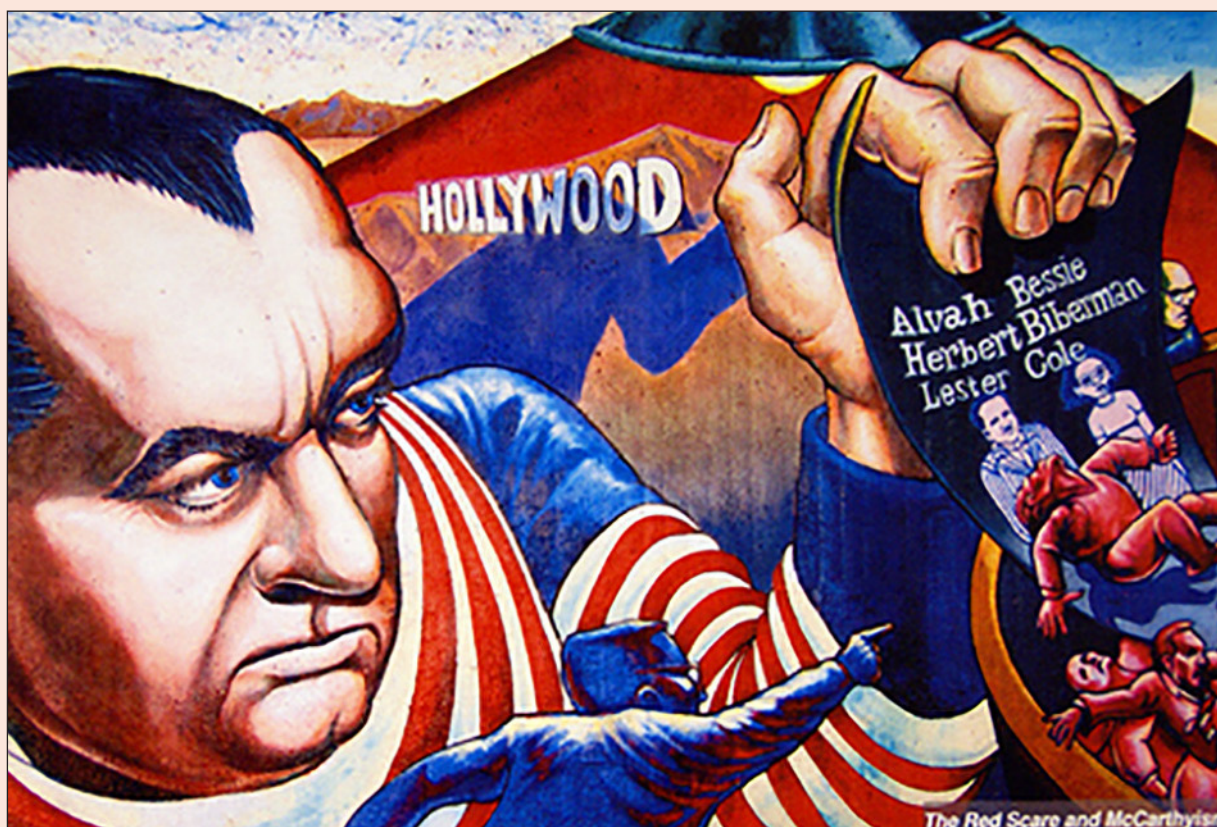
The cost of maize production needs to reduce by bringing down the cost of inputs such as fertiliser, and increasing production yield efficiencies per acre through mechanisation and providing technical support to farmers.

This will result in reduced cost of production per tonne or a 50kg bag of maize than is presently the case.

US reinvents McCarthy

First it was the Soviet Union that scared the United States into believing there were “Reds Under The Beds” as the saying goes – the fear that communists were infiltrating capitalist society. The McCarthy witch-hunts of the 1950s saw nearly 10,000 people lose their jobs as a result. But the paranoia has now returned, this time in the form of a fear of the Chinese.

Amanda Yee
reports



The art of propaganda and paranoia . . . posters depicting the McCarthy witch-hunts of the 1950s (left); the modern-day fear of Chinese acting as foreign agents in universities and

ON FEBRUARY 9, 1950 the period of Red Scare witch-hunts officially launched in the United States as Senator Joseph McCarthy addressed the Women’s Republican Club in Wheeling, West Virginia.

Just months before, Mao Zedong had led the communists to victory over the US-backed Kuomintang, establishing the People’s Republic of China (PRC). Looking for scapegoats to bear responsibility for their so-called “loss of China”, McCarthy warned of “enemies within” the US government. Claiming government infiltration by communists, McCarthy asserted he had in his possession a list of 205 names in the State Department who were “card-carrying members” of – or at least loyal to – the Communist Party.

In the beginning, McCarthy directed the witch-hunts against China experts within the State Department, but in the highly politicised Cold War environment, the persecution soon spilled over to other government employees, and then throughout society as Hollywood actors, teachers, academics, union organisers, civil rights activists, artists, and many others were targeted as communist sympathisers or suspected Soviet agents. By the time the Red Scare concluded in the late 1950s, hundreds of people had been imprisoned, while thousands of others had been blacklisted, lost their jobs, or otherwise had their reputations ruined.

The “loss of China” was never forgotten by the US ruling class. More than 70 years later, with China rising as an economic superpower, we have entered a new era of McCarthyism and anti-communist fervour with the same enemy.

The same Red Scare propaganda and lies

“ONE thing to remember in discussing the communists in our government is that we are not dealing with spies who get 30 pieces of silver to steal the blueprints of new weapons,” McCarthy warned in his 1950 speech. “We are dealing with a far more sinister type of activity because it permits the enemy to guide and shape our policy.”

This new era of McCarthyism reproduces the same paranoia as the first iteration in the 1950s: that communist infiltrators, both in government and throughout wider society, are influencing policy and public opinion in the enemy’s interests.

“For decades, a broad range of entities in China have forged ties with government and business leaders at the state and local levels of the United States, often yielding benefits for both sides,” a 2022 US National Counterintelligence and Security Center report stated. “However, as tensions between Beijing and Washington have grown, the government of the PRC under President Xi Jinping has increasingly sought to exploit these China-US subnational relationships to influence US policies and advance PRC geopolitical interests.”

This time around though, the Red Scare propaganda has the benefit of being laundered through DC policy think tanks, giving it an additional veneer of legitimacy.

A 2018 Hoover Institute report ominously warned of the Communist Party of China’s reach in its supposed project to assert political influence:

“China’s influence activities have moved beyond their traditional United Front focus on diaspora communities to target a far broader range of sectors in Western societies, ranging from think tanks, universities, and media to state, local, and national government institutions,” it said. “China seeks to promote views sympathetic to the Chinese Government, policies, society, and culture; suppress alternative views; and co-opt key American players to support China’s foreign policy goals and economic interests . . . Except for Russia, no other country’s efforts to influence American politics and society is as extensive and well-funded as China’s.”

Going one step further, a Council on Foreign Relations report in 2022 accused China of running a “global influence campaign”, in which it was not only trying to shape US policy and be certain to meddle in the then upcoming 2022 midterm elections, but was also “continuing a pattern of influence operations it began earlier this century in the Pacific Rim, seeking to

shift narratives in its favour and promote pro-Beijing politicians – or sometimes just sow chaos and falsehoods.”

The Foreign Agents Registration Act

BUT we cannot discuss McCarthyism in the 21st century without explaining its weapon of choice in the new Cold War: the Foreign Agents Registration Act. FARA is a US law ostensibly aimed at curbing foreign influence in politics, and requires “foreign agents” (those who engage in advocacy or lobbying on behalf of a foreign entity) to register with the Department of Justice, periodically disclose activities, and “comply with extensive reporting requirements”. However, the law is written in such a sweeping and broad manner that it lends itself easily to interpretation and political weaponisation.

Nick Robinson, a senior legal advisor at the International Center for Non-Profit Law wrote: “On its face, FARA is startlingly broad: it applies equally to ‘agents’ of a foreign government, like Saudi Arabia or of a foreign person or entity, such as a Japanese company like Toyota, a non-profit based abroad, like Amnesty International, or a foreign-based media organization, such as The Guardian.”

Covered activity under the Act includes attempts to influence US public opinion on any foreign or domestic policy issue; soliciting or disbursing anything of value; or disseminating oral, visual, or written information of any kind for or in the interest of a foreign principal.

Unlike a traditional principal-agent relationship, an agency relationship under the Act does not require “direction” or “control” by the principal over the agent, or even the consent of either party. Instead, it can be created if someone in the United States acts at the mere “request” of a foreign principal. For example, if a non-profit in Chicago sets up a public meeting at the “request” of a Canadian non-profit partner to discuss the best way to fight the opioid epidemic, the Chicago non-profit would arguably need to register as a “foreign agent”. In setting the public meeting, the Chicago non-profit would

be attempting to influence US public opinion on a domestic policy issue at the “request” of a foreign principal – the Canadian non-profit.

Based on this extremely broad definition, any organisation or individual could also be indicted under FARA for what the DOJ deems as “engag[ing] in ‘political activities’ on behalf of a foreign principal”.

“In other words, ‘political activities’ includes not just lobbying US government officials, but, arguably, it covers almost any advocacy efforts that engage with the public,” continued Robinson.

“It also seemingly includes most reporting by journalists, if the journalist ‘influence[s]’ US public opinion on a policy issue, even if it is just through factual reporting to create a more informed debate.”

And FARA has been used in exactly that manner. As tensions with China increased in 2018, the DOJ invoked FARA to force Chinese state media outlets like Xinhua News Agency and China Global Television Network (CGTN) to register as “foreign agents.” This move on the part of the ruling class effectively designated Chinese news outlets as unreliable “propaganda” that promotes the interests of a foreign entity, while at the same time, legitimising warmongering media sources like The New York Times and The Washington Post – which are controlled by their corporate owners – as the true purveyors of trusted, objective journalism. Furthermore, other foreign news agencies from countries that are allies of the United States and toe the Washington consensus, such as The Guardian and BBC News, are not required to register under FARA.

FARA was created in 1938 as a recommendation by the Special Committee on Un-American Activities, a precursor to the House Committee on Un-American Activities – the investigative body that led the witch hunts against suspected communist sympathisers during the McCarthyism era. The law was first used to prosecute those spreading Nazi propaganda, but enforcement began to decline after the end of World War Two. The few indictments seen during the Cold War

targeted communists – most notably, W.E.B. Dubois was prosecuted under FARA in 1951 as an agent of the Soviet Union for petitioning against the proliferation of nuclear weapons.

Since the end of World War Two, FARA remained a relatively obscure law that was rarely enforced. While the DOJ encouraged compliance, most lobbyists considered it a bureaucratic inconvenience to be skirted. It is worth noting, however, that in the last 40 years on the rare occasions the act was enforced, it was often weaponised against anti-war and progressive activist organisations, such as the Palestine Information Office, Irish Northern Aid Committee, and the Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador.

But all that changed with the Robert Mueller investigation into alleged Russian interference in the 2016 presidential election, which led to the prosecution of Trump’s former campaign manager Paul Manafort and his deputy Rick Gates under FARA. The number of indictments have skyrocketed since.

Amid an escalating trade war and increasing political tensions with China, the Trump administration then began using FARA to its own political advantage. For instance, in 2018 the House Committee on Natural Resources brought FARA inquiries against four environmental advocacy organisations. One of these organisations was the Natural Resources Defense Council, which the Committee accused of “aiding China’s perception management efforts” with regard to environmental protections “in ways that may be detrimental to the United States”.

In 2018, the DOJ announced it would begin invoking and enforcing FARA as part of its China Initiative – a programme launched to go after and prosecute Chinese nationals living in the United States for alleged “espionage” activities and theft of intellectual property.

In 2021, MIT Technology Review conducted a thorough analysis of all the cases brought under the China Initiative and published its findings. From the MIT report, it’s clear the China Initiative was nothing more than a McCarthyist witch hunt, based on racial profiling,

The report concluded that the DOJ had “neither officially defined the China Initiative nor explained what leads it to label a case as part of the initiative”; that most cases had little or no obvious connection to national security issues; that 90 percent of those charged under the initiative were of Chinese descent; and that, over the course of the programme, there was a decreasing focus away from espionage and hacking toward “research integrity” issues – in many cases, academics or researchers were targeted for simply failing to disclose foreign affiliations on grant-related forms. Of the nearly two dozen cases of FARA brought against academics, most ended in dismissals, with many of the defendants accusing investigators of misconduct.

The controversial China Initiative programme officially ended in 2022, but FARA continues to be invoked under the Biden administration. What was once a rarely enforced, obscure law is now being used with increasing regularity as the DOJ weaponises FARA to target activists who speak out on US foreign policy.

Under Biden, FARA has been invoked to target Black Liberation activists like the African People’s Socialist Party for criticising US involvement in the Ukraine war and Chinese American hotel worker and organizer Li Tang “Henry” Liang for advocating peaceful relations between the United States and China.

Secret Chinese police stations

AS THE Biden administration continues the policy of containment and military encirclement of China abroad, the DOJ is using FARA to go after so-called “secret Chinese police stations” domestically. In New York City earlier this year, FBI authorities arrested “Harry” Lu Jianwang and Chen Jinping, two leaders of the American Changle Association, for failing to register as foreign agents. The ACA is an organisation that operates out of Manhattan Chinatown and assists immigrants from the Changle, Fujian region in China. Authorities accused the two men of setting up a “secret Chinese police station”

Why Red Scare tactics



US society at large (above); and a stereotypical representation of China under the leadership of Mao Zedong, from 1954 until 1959, and Xi Jinping, who has served as President since 2013

in their ACA Chinatown office, which, they alleged, operates as a satellite of the Chinese government to surveil and harass dissidents living abroad.

The case in New York City is only part of a wider crackdown on what the media refers to as “secret Chinese police stations” across the globe. Two Chinese centres in Québec – the Service à la Famille Chinoise du Grand Montréal and the Centre Sino-Québec de la Rive-Sud – were accused by Canadian authorities of being such overseas stations. Despite the Public Safety Minister announcing that they had been shut down, representatives of the two centres both stated they had never been approached by authorities or police and were, in fact, still open to the public. The media circus had already done its damage, however, as both centres lost a number of donors due to the press frenzy.

These centres are actually what are known as overseas police service stations, extremely common in areas with high concentrations of Chinese immigrants, and serve

IT IS clear that this new era of McCarthyism relies on broad interpretations and selective enforcement of existing legal measures like the Foreign Agents Registration Act, and overall through racial profiling, guilt-by-association tactics, and imposing a nefarious frame onto fairly innocuous circumstances

a function similar to that of a consulate. The stations usually consist of a video conferencing room and are set up in conjunction with local municipal governments in China to assist immigrants in filling out paperwork and renewing Chinese drivers’ licenses remotely. The stations are not secret, as they promote

their services among community members, nor do they have police on staff or on premises.

All of the accusations against these so-called “secret Chinese police stations” are based on a Safeguard Defenders 2022 report, which claims the existence of over 100 of these centres across the globe. According to the NGO, these police stations are used to monitor overseas Chinese citizens charged with various crimes in China and pressure them to return to face trial.

But according to Yale Law School Paul Tsai China Center senior fellow Jeremy Daum, who analysed the report and checked its Chinese-language sources, the paper is riddled with factual, contextual, and translation errors – as well as a lack of general understanding of how the Chinese government works. For example, the overseas service stations are not set up by the central authorities of the Chinese government as implied in the report. They are set up by local provincial governments, such as Fuzhou, Anxi, and Qingtian counties. They are not a programme

set forth and required by central authorities, nor are they national policy – this would be like equating a county-level initiative in the United States with one of the entire US federal government. And while the Chinese government does have a national policy of persuading fugitives abroad to return to face trial (which is not unusual in and of itself – the United States does the same and has extradition treaties with over 100 countries), all of that police work occurs in China. There is no link or coordination between that investigative work and the local service stations abroad.

According to Daum, one source quoted in the report even directly contradicted the authors’ own claims, stating, “These measures aren’t at all required by the central authorities, and aren’t even the province’s ideas, but are just ‘measures thought up’ at the basic level to move work forward.”

When Daum’s criticisms were brought to Safeguard Defenders’ attention, the NGO issued a new version of the report correcting some of the mistakes raised, and

then yet another version a couple of weeks later addressing more issues. However, Daum notes that similar errors remain, and he still wasn’t persuaded by the report’s claims that China had launched a secret international policing campaign. Despite the release of these updated versions, we should be extremely cautious about trusting at face value the overall findings given the significant number of errors to begin with, and the contextual manipulation and carelessness of translation to fit the authors’ agenda.

Denial of student visas

IN 2020, Trump issued an executive order cancelling the visas of thousands of Chinese graduate students and researchers who had ties to universities affiliated with the People’s Liberation Army. Biden has continued this policy, denying visas to graduate students based on the Chinese universities they attend. According to the proclamation, Chinese graduate students can be denied visas to study or conduct research in the United States if they receive “funding from or who currently is employed by, studies at, or conducts research at or on behalf of, or has been employed by, studied at, or conducted research at or on behalf of an entity in the PRC that implements or supports the PRC’s “military-civil fusion strategy”.

“To put the proclamation in perspective,” stated Stuart Anderson in Forbes, “If another country had a similar policy, it might deny visas to Americans who studied at US universities that ‘support’ a strategy or actions the foreign government finds objectionable or that received funding from the US Department of Defense.”

Of course, while there are hundreds of universities in the United States that receive DOD funding, the students who attend those universities are not automatically affiliated with the US military. Nor do all students automatically endorse the views or actions of their universities.

And how does the US government determine which Chinese universities to blacklist? The primary source it depends on for these denials of visas is the China Defence Universities Tracker, an

online database which assesses the level of risk of each Chinese university on a scale from “low” to “very high”. The database is a creation of the Australian Strategic Policy Institute, a Canberra-based think tank that was one of the primary purveyors of the “Uyghur genocide” myth a few years ago.

In a 2018 report, ASPI accused students from PLA-affiliated universities of infiltrating Five Eyes universities to build up China’s military capabilities, despite representatives of some host universities stating there was little evidence to suggest this beyond “shadowy inferences”.

According to ASPI’s 2021-2022 annual report, the think tank received over a million dollars from the US State Department alone, along with hundreds of thousands of dollars from military contractors like Boeing Australia and Lockheed Martin. Because of its funding streams, ASPI has been one of the most vocal and hawkish peddlers of Cold War anti-China propaganda in the last few years.

China is not the enemy

IT IS clear that this new era of McCarthyism relies on broad interpretations and selective enforcement of existing legal measures like FARA, and overall through racial profiling, guilt-by-association tactics, and imposing a nefarious frame onto fairly innocuous circumstances.

But the anti-communist witch-hunts are nothing more than a red herring. Capitalists are waging an all-out offensive against the working class, as rent skyrockets across the country, homelessness surges, inflation continues to rise, and people struggle to afford basic necessities. They would rather spend enormous sums of money on the military preparing for conflict with China than addressing any of these deepening economic and social crises. But to get away with this, they need to demonise Chinese people domestically and China abroad, convincing the US population to feel fearful and paranoid.

We should remain unwavering and clear-sighted in knowing who our real enemy is: the US war machine and the capitalist class.

Liberation



Former Senator Joseph McCarthy dominated the US political climate in the early 1950s through his sensational but unproven charges of communist subversion in high government circles, industry, the arts, and the country at large

Niger – another flashpoint in AFRICOM bid for control

Imperialist powers behind the threat of military intervention

Thomas Scripps

THE impoverished West African state of Niger is the latest flashpoint in the struggle by the imperialist powers for a redivision of the world.

The issues involved in the NATO-Russia war in Ukraine – a fight for territory, strategic resources and regime-change – are erupting all over the globe, in China and Taiwan, and now in the Sahel region of Africa.

Though stalled for the moment, what would be a devastating war led by the most powerful country in the region, Nigeria, to oust the coup leaders in Niger and reinstate President Mohamed Bazoum is under active preparation. At a summit of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in the Nigerian capital Abuja recently, leaders agreed to activate a standby military force and threatened that “no option had been taken off the table”.

They agreed a new round of sanctions on Niger, which has been plunged into blackouts by electricity cut-offs and has seen food prices rise 60 percent amid a blockade and the freezing of assets and trade.

A conflict would draw in the entire region. Senegal, Benin and the Ivory Coast have already pledged to send troops to aid Nigeria. Mali, Burkina Faso and Guinea have declared for the military coup leaders in Niger.

Behind the proposed ECOWAS action stand the imperialist powers, who are intent on blocking Russia and China from further penetrating a continent whose strategic significance is growing rapidly. The long-term decline of France’s economic position in its former West African colonies – culminating in the last three years in a dramatic collapse of its military presence in Mali, Burkina Faso and now perhaps Niger – has thrown open the Sahel region to intense geopolitical competition.

Bazoum was considered an important Western ally. The US and the European powers have responded to the coup against him by cutting aid to Niger supposedly provided on “humanitarian” grounds, on which it relies for 40 percent of its annual government budget. They are determined to secure their interests whatever the cost.

Speaking after “difficult” talks with the coup leaders, US Acting Deputy Secretary of State Victoria Nuland – veteran of the US-backed 2014 coup in Ukraine – threatened, “We’ll be watching the situation, but we understand our legal responsibilities and I explained those very clearly to the guys who were responsible for this and that it is not our desire to go there, but they may push us to that point.”

Caution over a proposed military intervention by ECOWAS has centred on concerns that such action has not been properly prepared and would spark mass opposition throughout the region. A misjudged war could explode the social pow-



SMUGGLING LINK TO COUP

OBSERVERS have linked Mohamed Bazoum’s support for European Union policies aimed at stifling migration routes through north Africa to his ousting as president of Niger.

Army officers toppled Bazoum on July 26 as Niger became the fourth West African country since 2020 to suffer a coup, following Burkina Faso, Guinea and Mali.

Domestically, Bazoum had been closely associated with a law against people smuggling that was brought in by Niger’s government with the support of EU authorities

in 2015, at the height of the European refugee crisis. Under the terms of a deal struck with EU leaders, Niger received aid money in return for blocking routes north.

Bazoum became interior minister in 2016, the same year the law was implemented. The legislation became known as the “Bazoum law”. In 2021, he was feted by the international community after winning elections that ushered in Niger’s first peaceful transition of power. The legislation was opposed by figures in the Nigerien military who had previously

benefited financially from bribes paid both by people smugglers and those being smuggled.

Alkontchy Mohamed, a community leader in Agadez – a desert city through which thousands of people used to pass – said everyone related to the people-smuggling industry had been affected by the law.

“The army officers who used to stand on the checkpoints, the people who drove the migrants, the people who would take migrants into Libya – the whole population used to depend on this business,” he said.

der keg in Nigeria, where the US and Britain are heavily invested politically and economically.

A great deal is at stake. The United States currently has 1,500 soldiers of its 6,500-strong declared African deployment stationed in Niger across two bases – one of which is the regional hub for drone missions. France has 1,100 troops in the country, Italy 300 and Germany around 100.

Niger is a major uranium producer, providing a quarter of Europe’s supply. It is due to start exporting oil and plays a central role in policing migration out of Africa to Europe. It has become a front-line state in a battle for economic and military pre-eminence in West Africa and across the whole continent.

Africa is home to an estimated 30 percent of the world’s mineral wealth, including 90 percent of its chromium and platinum – crucial to the green energy transition.

Lithium

Another such mineral is cobalt, of which 70 percent of the world’s supply is produced in the Democratic Republic of Congo. By the end of the century, Africa could also account for a fifth of the world’s lithium supply.

The continent also produces 65 percent of the world’s diamonds and is home to 40 percent of its gold reserves, 12 percent of its oil and 8 percent of its natural gas, while Morocco alone is home to 75 percent of the world’s phosphate rock, crucial for fertiliser.

In terms of markets, Africa’s consumer expenditure is on track to grow from US\$1.4 trillion in 2015 to US\$2.5 trillion in 2030.

The US and Europe are concerned not to let Niger be another loss to the claims made by China

and Russia on these riches and opportunities.

Russia’s Wagner group (formerly headed by the late Yevgeny Prigozhin) is operating in Mali, to Niger’s immediate West, Libya, to its North East, the Central African Republic (CAR) and Sudan, providing armed forces for their governments in conflicts with local rebel groups. In the CAR and Sudan, Wagner also runs private gold and diamond mines.

Russian President Vladimir Putin inaugurated a Russia-Africa summit in 2019 promising to help push back against “an array of Western countries [that] are resorting to pressure, intimidation and blackmail of sovereign African governments”. The second, far less well-attended summit held under conditions of anti-Russian sanctions and the war in Ukraine, took place last month, where a special effort was made to court Burkina Faso’s “interim leader” Colonel Ibrahim Traoré.

Russia has sought to leverage its relatively meagre resources to gain allies and the occasional lucrative venture, but China is throwing enormous economic weight behind securing control of Africa’s resources markets. It has controlling stakes in large swathes of the continent’s mining industry – including the bulk of uranium mines in Niger, plus its oil industry – forming part of a total FDI (foreign direct investment) stock of US\$43.4 billion in 2020, a 100-fold increase in 17 years.

China is Africa’s largest bilateral lender, loaning US\$153 billion in the two decades to 2019, and its second largest trade partner after the European Union, bigger than any other single country.

Both Russia and China are also major arms suppliers to sub-Saharan Africa, accounting for 26 and 18 percent of sales respectively

in the last five years, above third-place France at 8 percent, and the US at 5 percent.

In 2019, US Africa Command (AFRICOM) launched a five-year plan to “deter” what it called “Chinese and Russian malign action”. Former head of AFRICOM, Marine Corps Gen Thomas Waldhauser, told Congress that year that both were after “access and influence to our detriment”, and that, within the decade, China could gain the capability to inhibit US military access and operations. The policy has remained unchanged since Trump’s Republicans were replaced by the Democrats under Biden.

Colin P. Clarke, former RAND analyst and current director of research at the global intelligence and security consultancy The Soufan Group, bluntly explained to Newsweek the implications of the Niger situation.

Vacuum

“This could take on the dimensions of a regional proxy war, with Western countries supporting ECOWAS and Russia supporting Niger – and Burkina Faso and Mali, if they joined in – with muscle from the Wagner Group,” he said.

“What’s happening in the Sahel is not a sideshow to great power competition, it is great power competition. The events unfolding are not doing so in a vacuum. The US, France, China, and Russia each have their own vested interests in Sahelian countries.”

Workers and the rural poor in Niger and West Africa are confronted with the catastrophe warned of by the International Committee of the Fourth International (ICFI) at its 1991 Berlin Conference of Workers against Imperialist War and Colonialism, held in response to the Gulf War.

The manifesto announcing that conference explained: “This ongoing and de facto partition of Iraq signals the start of a new division of the world by the imperialists. The colonies of yesterday are again to be subjugated. The conquests and annexations which, according to the opportunist apologists of imperialism, belonged to a bygone era are once again on the order of the day.”

Based on Trotsky’s theory of permanent revolution, the statement warned that the struggle “against imperialist oppression cannot be waged successfully as long as the working class remains under the political domination of any wing of the national bourgeoisie”. It is inseparable from a fight against national ruling classes which have overseen the continued gruelling exploitation of the African masses, kept in power by militaries trained and funded by the imperialists.

Niger must above all serve as a warning to the working class all over the world of the urgent need to oppose the predatory war aims of the imperialist powers. As the ICFI and the International Youth and Students for Social Equality insisted in calling for the building of a worldwide movement against the NATO-Russia war:

“The war in Ukraine is not an episode that will soon be resolved and followed by a return to ‘normalcy’. It is the beginning of a violent eruption of a global crisis that can be resolved only in one of two ways. The capitalist solution leads to nuclear war, though the word “solution” can hardly be rationally applied to what would amount to planetary suicide. Thus, the only viable response, from the standpoint of securing the future of mankind, is world socialist revolution.”

wsws.org

CHINA WATCH

INTEREST in China is growing, yet most news and analysis outside the country is produced by mainstream media from the global north. To provide Chinese perspectives, the *Dongsheng Collective* – researchers from various countries – offers a China digest. This is an edited selection. <https://dongshengnews.org/en>

Xi, Modi in border talks

CHINESE President Xi Jinping and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi have met to discuss the need to resolve the border dispute between the two countries. Both sides agreed to accelerate efforts to withdraw troops and reduce tensions along the “Line of Actual Control”. In the 19th round of dialogue between Indian and Chinese army corps commanders held in mid-August, both sides withdrew troops from five points of friction and agreed to maintain peace and continue negotiations.

Global Times

Africa industry pledge

AFRICAN countries have asked Beijing to change the focus of investments to prioritise industrialisation instead of infrastructure. In response to the request, Xi announced the launch of the Africa Industrialisation Support Initiative during the China-Africa Leaders’ Dialogue in Johannesburg to allocate more assistance, investment, and financing resources to industrialisation programmes on the continent.

Reuters

Cleaning up deep seas

ENVIRONMENTAL regulations have been strengthened in deep seas to meet food security goals. Coastal regions will have to accelerate the introduction of local standards for the discharge of water contaminated by aquaculture, while the Ministry of Environment will support satellite monitoring. China has room to expand deepwater aquaculture as production represents about 1 percent of freshwater production.

South China Morning Post

Call for return of relics

AFTER the discovery that objects have gone missing from the British Museum, Chinese netizens have once again demanded the return of looted relics. The museum holds a total of 23,000 Chinese relics, of which 2,000 are on long-term display. It is estimated that 10 million artifacts were stolen from China starting from the First Opium War.

Global Times

Real estate incentives

THE government has relaxed mortgage policies and expanded tax incentives for real estate developers to stimulate the housing market. Family members of those who own property are now eligible for the credit policy for first-time homebuyers, and those selling their homes and buying another within a year will be reimbursed for the income tax paid on the sale.

Caixin Global

Africa agriculture plan

CHINA has announced a plan to support agricultural modernisation in Africa, which includes support for the agricultural industrial chain and the pursuit of self-sufficiency in cereals. Through the new proposal, the country is expected to encourage Chinese companies to increase agricultural investments and seed production in Africa. China eliminated tariffs on 98 percent of goods imported from several African countries in 2022.

South China Morning Post

From a stand on pharmaceutical drugs to plan for new world order

BRICS bid to boost trade in the Global South

IN 2003, high officials from Brazil, India, and South Africa met in Mexico to discuss their mutual interests in the trade of pharmaceutical drugs.

India was and is one of the world's largest producers of various drugs, including those used to treat HIV-AIDS; Brazil and South Africa were both in need of affordable drugs for patients infected with HIV as well as a host of other treatable ailments. But these three countries were barred from easily trading with each other because of strict intellectual property laws established by the World Trade Organisation.

Just a few months prior to their meeting, the three countries formed a grouping, known as IBSA, to discuss and clarify intellectual property and trade issues, but also to confront countries of the Global North for their asymmetrical demand that the poorer nations end their agricultural subsidies. The notion of South-South cooperation framed these discussions.

Interest in South-South cooperation dates back to the 1940s, when the United Nations Economic and Social Council established its first technical aid programme to assist trade between the new post-colonial states in Africa, Asia, and Latin America.

Six decades later, just as IBSA was formed, this spirit was commemorated by the United Nations Day for South-South Cooperation on December 19, 2004. At this time, the UN also created the Special Unit for South-South Cooperation (ten years later, in 2013, this institution was renamed the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation), which built upon the 1988 agreement on the Global System of Trade Preferences Among Developing Countries.

As of 2023, this pact includes 42 member states from Africa, Asia, and Latin America, that are collectively home to four billion people and have a combined market of US\$16 trillion (roughly 20 percent of global merchandise imports). It is important to register that this longstanding agenda to increase trade between Southern countries forms the pre-history of BRICS, set up in 2009 and presently made up of Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa.

The entire BRICS project is centred around the question of whether countries at the nether end of the neocolonial system can break out of that system through mutual trade and cooperation, or whether the larger countries (including those in BRICS) will inevitably enjoy asymmetries of power and scale against smaller countries and



Brazil's President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, Chinese President Xi Jinping, South African President Cyril Ramaphosa, India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Russia's Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov pose at the Sandton Convention Centre, Johannesburg

Six more countries join fight for multipolarity

SAUDI Arabia and Iran are among six countries to join BRICS as new members next year, South African President Cyril Ramaphosa announced on the final day of the group's summit.

The group encompassing five major emerging economies – China, Brazil, South Africa, Russia and India – which makes decisions by consensus, agreed on “the guiding principles, standards, criteria and procedures of the BRICS expansion process”, during the three-day annual summit held in Johannesburg last month.

As part of the first phase, Argentina,

Egypt, Ethiopia and the United Arab Emirates will join Saudi Arabia and Iran to become full BRICS members in January 2024. Other phases will follow.

“This membership expansion is historic,” Chinese President Xi Jinping said.

“The expansion is also a new starting point for BRICS cooperation. It will bring new vigour to the BRICS cooperation mechanism and further strengthen the force for world peace and development.”

The core group of five BRICS countries had been discussing the issue of expansion for more than a year, Ramaphosa said.

The expansion is part of the group's plan to build dominance and reshape global governance into a “multipolar” world order that puts voices of the Global South at the centre of the world agenda.

The inclusion of Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Iran and Egypt marks the first MENA representation, and the inclusion of Argentina was championed by member Brazil.

Expansion was pushed heavily by Russia and China, analysts said, as they faced pushback from Western nations in the form of sanctions.

Al Jazeera

therefore reproduce inequalities rather than transcend them.

Our latest dossier, on Marxist dependency theory, calls into question any capitalist project in the South that believes it can somehow break free from the neocolonial system by importing debt and exporting cheap commodities. Despite the limitations of the BRICS project, it is clear that the increase in South-South trade and the development of Southern institutions (for development financing, for instance) challenges the neocolonial system even if it does not immediately transcend it. At Tricontinental: Institute for Social Research, we have been closely following the developments and contradictions of the BRICS project from its inception, and continue to do so.

Pressure

The 15th BRICS summit took place in Johannesburg, South Africa, from August 22 to 24. The meeting came as two of the group's members, Russia and China, face a New Cold War with the United States and its allies, while the other members find themselves under immense pressure to be drawn into the conflict.

The summit has the potential to make history. The heads of state of Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa gathered for their first face-to-face meeting since the

2019 summit in Brasilia, Brazil. The meeting took place 18 months since the beginning of military conflict in Ukraine, which has not only raised tensions between the US-led Western powers and Russia to a level unseen since the Cold War but also sharpened differences between the Global North and South.

There are growing cracks in the unipolar international order imposed by Washington and Brussels on the rest of the world through the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), the international financial system, the control of information flows (in both traditional and social media networks), and the indiscriminate use of unilateral sanctions against an increasing number of countries. As United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres recently put it, “the post-Cold War period is over. A transition is under way to a new global order”.

In this global context, three of the most important debates at the Johannesburg summit were: (1) the possible expansion of BRICS membership, (2) the expansion of the membership of its New Development Bank (NDB), and (3) the NDB's role in creating alternatives to the use of the US dollar. According to Anil Sooklal, South Africa's ambassador to BRICS, 22 countries have formally applied to join the group (including Saudi Arabia,

Argentina, Algeria, Mexico, and Indonesia) and a further two dozen have expressed interest. Even with numerous challenges to overcome, the BRICS are now seen as a major driving force of the world economy and of economic developments across the Global South in particular.

In the middle of the last decade, BRICS experienced a number of problems. With the election of Prime Minister Narendra Modi in India (2014) and the coup against President Dilma Rousseff in Brazil (2016), two of the group's member countries became headed by right-wing governments more favourable to Washington. Both India and Brazil retreated in their participation in the group. The de facto absence of Brazil, which from the outset had been one of the key driving forces behind the BRICS, represented a significant loss for the consolidation of the group. These developments undermined and hampered the progress of the NDB and the Contingent Reserve Arrangement (CRA), established in 2015 – which represented the greatest institutional achievement of the BRICS to date.

Although the NDB has made some progress, it has fallen short of its original objectives. To date, the bank has approved some US\$32.8 billion in financing (in fact, less than that has been issued), while the CRA – which has US\$100 bil-

lion in funds to assist countries that have a shortage of US dollars in their international reserves and are facing short-term balance of payments or liquidity pressures – has never been activated.

However, developments in recent years have reinvigorated the BRICS project. The decisions of Moscow and Beijing to respond to escalations of aggression in the New Cold War by Washington and Brussels; the return of Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva to the presidency of Brazil in 2022 and the consequent appointment of Dilma Rousseff to the presidency of the NDB; and the relative estrangement, to varying degrees, of India and South Africa from the Western powers have resulted in a “perfect storm” that seems to have rebuilt a sense of political unity in BRICS (despite unresolved tensions between India and China).

Exports

Added to this is the growing weight of BRICS in the global economy and strengthened economic interaction between its members. In 2020, the global share of BRICS's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in purchasing power parity terms – 31.5 percent – overtook that of the Group of Seven (G7) – 30.7 percent – and this gap is expected to grow. Bilateral trade among BRICS countries

has also grown robustly: Brazil and China are breaking records every year, reaching US\$150 billion in 2022; Russian exports to India tripled from April to December 2022, year-on-year, expanding to US\$32.8 billion; while trade between China and Russia jumped from US\$147 billion in 2021 to US\$190 billion in 2022, an increase of nearly 30 percent.

Faced with this dynamic international situation and growing requests for expansion, BRICS faced a number of important questions:

In addition to providing concrete responses to interested applicants, expansion has the potential to increase the political and economic weight of BRICS and, eventually, strengthen other regional platforms that its members belong to. But expansion also requires having to decide on the specific form that membership should take and may increase the complexity of consensus building, with a risk of slowing the progress of decision making and initiatives. How should these matters be dealt with?

How can the NDB's financing capacity be increased, as well as its coordination with other development banks of the Global South and other multilateral banks? And, above all, how can the NDB, in partnership with the BRICS' network of think tanks, promote the formulation of a new development policy for the Global South?

Since the BRICS member countries have solid international reserves (with South Africa having a little less), it's unlikely that they will need to use the CRA, instead, this fund could provide countries in need with an alternative to the political blackmail of the International Monetary Fund, which requires developing countries to enact devastating austerity measures in exchange for loans.

BRICS is reported to be discussing the creation of a reserve currency that would enable trade and investment without the use of the US dollar. If this were established it could be one more step in efforts to create alternatives to the dollar, but questions remain. How could the stability of such a reserve currency be ensured? How could it be articulated with newly created trade mechanisms which do not use the dollar, such as bilateral China-Russia, China-Brazil, Russia-India, and other arrangements?

How can cooperation and technology transfer support the re-industrialisation of countries like Brazil and South Africa, especially in strategic sectors such as biotech, information technology, artificial intelligence, and renewable energies, while also fighting poverty and inequality, and achieving other basic demands of the peoples of the South?

Leaders representing 71 countries of the Global South were invited to attend the meeting in Johannesburg and with six more countries now joining BRICS there is a lot of work to do to answer these questions and make progress on the urgent matters in global development.

Our institute continues to track these developments, neither with the belief that the BRICS project offers global salvation, nor with cynicism. History is moved, not by purity, but by the world's contradictions.

Tricontinental

There are sufficient resources for needs

But not enough for land mafias and capitalists

Vijay Prashad

ON JULY 20, the United Nations released a document called A New Agenda for Peace. In the opening section of the report, UN Secretary-General António Guterres made some remarks that bear close reflection:

We are now at an inflection point. The post-Cold War period is over. A transition is under way to a new global order. While its contours remain to be defined, leaders around the world have referred to multipolarity as one of its defining traits. In this moment of transition, power dynamics have become increasingly fragmented as new poles of influence emerge, new economic blocs form and axes of contestation are redefined. There is greater competition among major powers and a loss of trust between the Global North and South. A number of States increasingly seek to enhance their strategic independence, while trying to manoeuvre across existing dividing lines. The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and the war in Ukraine have hastened this process.

We are, he says, in a moment of transition. The world is moving away from the post-Cold War era, in which the United States and its close allies, Europe and Japan, (collectively known as the Triad) exerted their unipolar power over the rest of the world, to a new period that some refer to as “multipolarity”.

The COVID-19 pandemic and the war in Ukraine accelerated developments that were already in motion before 2020. The gradual attrition of the Western bloc has led to contestation between the Triad and newly emerging powers. This contestation is most fierce in the Global South, where trust of the Global North is the weakest it has been in a generation.

The poorer nations, in the current moment, are not looking to yoke themselves to either the fragile West or the emergent new powers but are seeking “strategic independence”. This assessment is largely correct, and the report is of great interest, but it is also weakened by its lack of specificity.

Not once in the report does the UN refer to any specific country, nor does it seek to properly identify the emergent powers. Since it does not provide a specific assessment of the current situation, it ends up providing the kind of vague solutions that have become commonplace and are meaningless (such as increasing trust and building solidarity). There is one specific proposal of great meaning, deal-

ing with the arms trade, to which I shall return at the end of this newsletter. But apart from showing concern over the ballooning weapons industry, the UN report attempts to erect a kind of moral scaffolding over the hard realities that it cannot directly confront.

What then are the specific reasons for the monumental global shifts identified by the United Nations? Firstly, there has been a serious deterioration of the relative power of the United States and its closest allies. The capitalist class in the West has been on a long-term tax strike, unwilling to pay either its individual or corporate taxes (in 2019, nearly 40 percent of multinational profits were moved to tax havens). Their search for quick profits and evasion of tax authorities has led to a long-term decrease in investment in the West, which has hollowed out its infrastructure and its productive base.

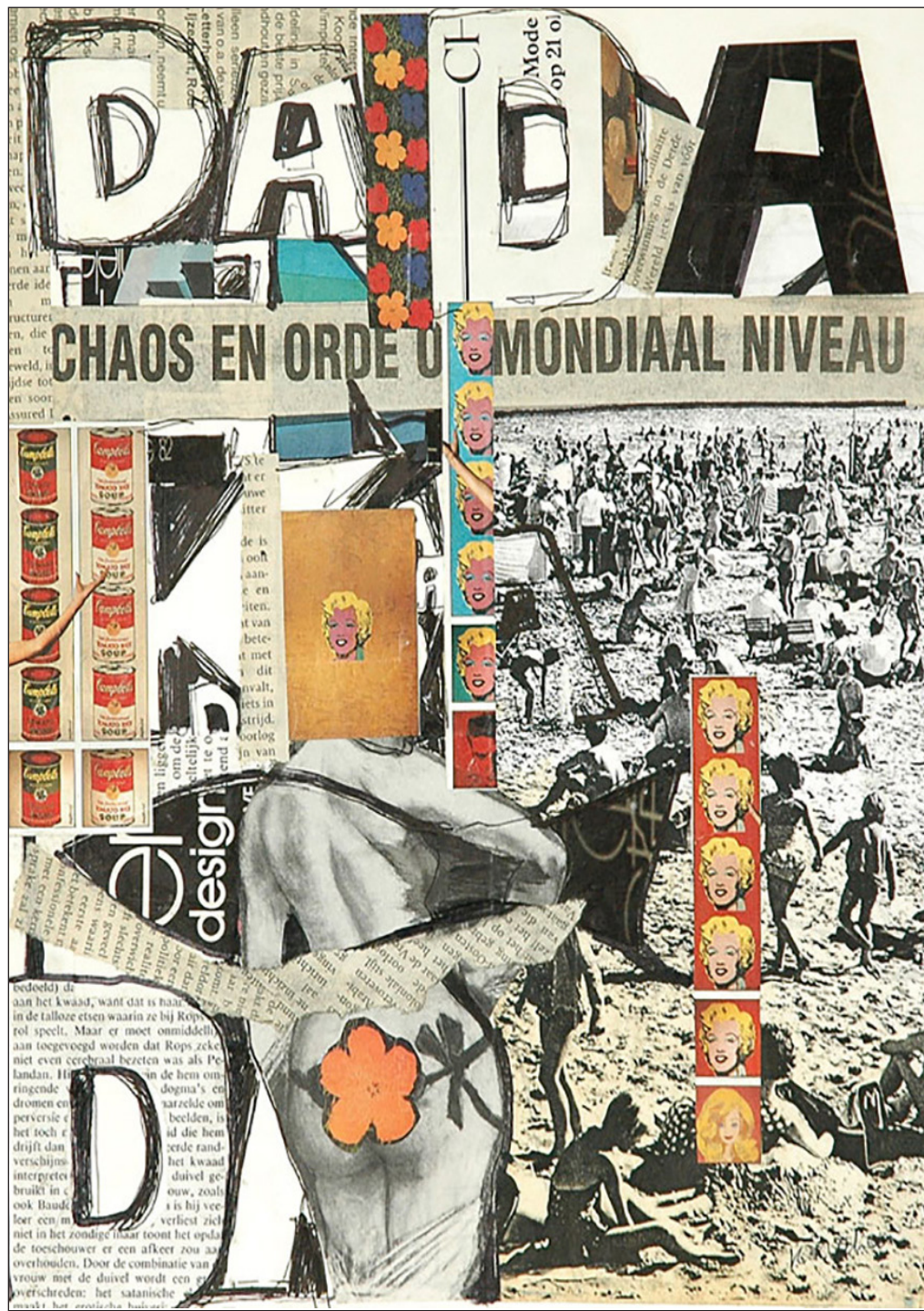
The transformation of Western social democrats, from champions of social welfare to neoliberal champions of austerity, has opened the door for the growth of despair and desolation, the emotional palate of the hard right. The Triad’s inability to smoothly govern the global neocolonial system has led to a “loss of trust” in the Global South towards the United States and its allies.

Secondly, it was astounding to countries such as China, India, and Indonesia to be asked by the G20 to provide liquidity to the Global North’s desiccated banking system in 2007-8. The confidence of these developing countries in the West decreased, while their own sense of themselves increased.

Austerity

This change in circumstances that led to the formation of the BRICS bloc in 2009 by Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa – the “locomotives of the South”, as was theorised by the South Commission in the 1980s and later deepened in their little-read 1991 report.

China’s growth by itself was astounding, but, as the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) noted in 2022, what was fundamental was that China was able to achieve structural transformation (namely, to move from low-productivity to high-productivity economic activities). This structural transformation could provide lessons for the rest of the Global South, lessons far more practical than those offered by the debt-austerity programme of the International Mon-



Kurt Nahar (Suriname), Untitled 2369, 2008. This montage is part of the art package that accompanies the Tricontinental newsletter upon which this article is based. The original presentation can be viewed by clicking here: <https://thetricontinental.org/newsletterissue/un-new-agenda-peace/>

etary Fund. Neither the BRICS project nor China’s Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) are military threats; both are essentially South-South commercial developments (along the grain of the agenda of the UN Office for South-South Cooperation). However, the West is unable to economically compete with either of these initiatives, and so it has adopted a fierce political and military response.

In 2018, the United States declared an end to the War on Terror and clearly articulated in its National Defence Strategy that its main problems were the rise of China and Russia. Then-US Defence Secretary Jim Mattis spoke about the need to prevent the rise of “near-peer rivals”, explicitly pointing to China and Russia, and suggested that the entire panoply of US power be used to bring them to their knees.

Not only does the United States have a vast network of roughly 800 overseas military bases – hundreds of which encircle Eurasia – it also has military allies from Germany to Japan that provide the US with forward positions against both Russia and China. For many years, the naval fleets of the US and its allies have conducted aggressive “freedom of navigation” exercises which encroach upon the territorial integrity of both Russia (in the Arctic, mainly) and China (in the South China Sea). In addition, provocative manoeuvres, such as the 2014 US intervention in Ukraine and massive 2015 US arms deal with Taiwan, further threatened Russia and China.

In 2018, the United States unilaterally withdrew from the Intermediate Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty (which followed the

2002 abandonment of the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty), a move which upset the apple cart of nuclear arms control and meant that the US contemplated the use of “tactical nuclear weapons” against both Russia and China.

The United Nations is correct in its assessment that the unipolar moment is now over, and that the world is moving towards a new, more complex reality. While the neocolonial structure of the world system remains largely intact, there are emerging shifts in the balance of forces with the rise of the BRICS and China, and these forces are attempting to create international institutions that challenge the established order.

Strategic

The danger to the world arises not from the possibility of global power becoming more fragmented and widely dispersed, but because the West refuses to come to terms with these major changes. The UN report notes that “military expenditures globally set a new record in 2022, reaching US\$2.24 trillion”, although the UN does not acknowledge that three-quarters of this money is spent by the member states of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO). Countries that want to exert their “strategic independence” – the UN’s phrase – are confronted with the following choice: either join in the West’s militarisation of the world or face annihilation by its superior arsenal.

A New Agenda for Peace is designed as part of a process that will culminate at a UN Summit for the Future to be held in September 2024. As part of this process, the UN is gathering proposals from

civil society, such as this one from Aotearoa Lawyers for Peace, Basel Peace Office, Move the Nuclear Weapons Money campaign, UNFOLD ZERO, Western States Legal Foundation, and the World Future Council, who call on the summit to adopt a declaration that:

- Reaffirms the obligation under Article 26 of the UN Charter to establish a plan for arms control and disarmament with the least diversion of resources for economic and social development;
- Calls on the UN Security Council, UN General Assembly and other relevant UN bodies to take action with respect to Article 26; and
- Calls on all states to implement this obligation through ratification of bilateral and multilateral arms control agreements, coupled with progressive and systematic reductions of military budgets and commensurate increases in financing for the sustainable development goals, climate protection and other national contributions to the UN and its specialised agencies.

THIS newsletter is dedicated to the memory of our comrade Subhash Munda (age 34), a leader of the Communist Party of India (Marxist), who was shot dead in Daldli Chowk (Ranchi, Jharkhand) on July 26.

Subhash, a fourth generation communist, was a leader of the Adivasi (indigenous-tribal) community and was killed for his fight against the land mafia.

There are not enough resources in the world to satisfy the greed of the land mafias and capitalists. But there are enough resources to fulfil human needs, as Subhash Munda knew and for which he fought.

Tricontinental

Protests in New York call for BlackRock to drop its Zambia debt

ON AUGUST 14, protestors in New York City held a rally to demand that BlackRock cancel its share of Zambia’s external debt.

The protestors rallied in Manhattan’s Bella Abzug Park, then marched to the BlackRock headquarters a few blocks away calling for investment management firm to “drop the debt!” and exposing its colonial relationship with Zambia.

The rally was organised by The People’s Forum and ANSWER Coalition, and endorsed by Nodutdol, the Party for Socialism and Liberation, Sisters in the Struggle, Bridging Africa and Black Americans, and more.

Holding US\$220 million in bonds, BlackRock is the largest private holder of Zambia’s external debt and plays a major role in keeping Zambia underdeveloped.

In its letter to BlackRock CEO Larry Fink, the United Nations Human Rights Council noted that the investment firm “bought [a] majority of the bonds since September 2020 when the country first requested for debt suspension on interest payments”.

BlackRock’s influence stretches across all industries as they own US\$10 trillion in various assets. It has a hand in almost all the major tech companies; Apple, Microsoft, Amazon, Google, etc, the pharmaceutical and fossil fuel industries, and also holds major investments in companies like Pfizer and Chevron.

BlackRock is also largest stakeholder in CoreCivic, the largest private prison firm in the United States. The firm even profits off war through massive investments in Lockheed Martin, Raytheon and Northrop Grumman, some of the largest weapons and defence companies in the United States.

“BlackRock and other multinational companies are modern-day Dutch East India companies,” Nova Felder of Bridging Africa and Black Americans said at the rally.

So who really is owed a debt? In front of the BlackRock offices, Eugene Puryear of ANSWER Coalition remarked that cancelling Zambia’s debt was “part and parcel of the reparations that are due for African people for 500 years of colonialism and slavery.”

According to Puryear, “It is not about what Zambia owes BlackRock, it’s about what they [BlackRock] owe. It’s about what their ancestors owe. It’s about what every institution in the country from insurance, to the top universities, to the top banks, all of them rooted, grounded, in slavery. So they owe money.”

Puryear’s comments mirror those of Thomas Sankara when he addressed the summit of the Organisation for African Unity in 1987. There, the revolutionary and first president of Burkina Faso said, “Debt’s origins come from colonialism’s origins. Those who lend us money are those who colonised us ... We cannot repay but the others owe us what the greatest wealth could never repay, that is blood debt.”

Liberation

Fears over Wagner's continued commitment to African causes

Prigozhin pledged support for expansion before his death in plane crash

Ope Adetayo

YEVGENY Prigozhin, the late head of Russia's Wagner mercenary group, had just left Mali after he filmed a video pledging to make "Africa even more free" before he perished in a plane crash in his home country.

His now confirmed death has sparked concerns for some client governments in Africa who rely on the group's services.

Patronage of Prigozhin's private military force has been on the rise in recent years since some African governments started turning towards Russia as an alternative international partner in their fight against rising insecurity from various armed groups.

President Faustin-Archange Touadéra of the Central Africa Republic (CAR) was the first to turn to the feared militia in 2018, but the shifting sands of democratic governments that have seen a rise in military takeovers in the Sahel region opened the door widely for Wagner.

Across the Sahel and central Africa, armed groups have continued to expand rapidly, their rise coinciding with protests against former colonial power France, which still wields enormous influence across the region.

Prigozhin was the face of the group's operations as he crisscrossed between Ukraine and Africa, pushing his stock-in-trade. His death, analysts say, will put a clog in the Wagner machine in Africa.

"Prigozhin himself was this incredibly charismatic, larger-than-life figure who had the managerial and business abilities to somehow bring all of these disparate entities and people together," said John Lechner, a security analyst and author of a forthcoming book on the Wagner Group.

Mutiny

Will expansion continue?

WHEN Prigozhin staged an aborted mutiny in Russia in June, exactly two months before his death, clouds began to hover over the military-business empire Prigozhin built on the continent.

Sergey Lavrov, Russia's foreign minister, said at the time that the group's operations would continue. But the fatal crash that claimed his life and his trusted lieutenant Dmitry Utkin has raised questions about what happens next.

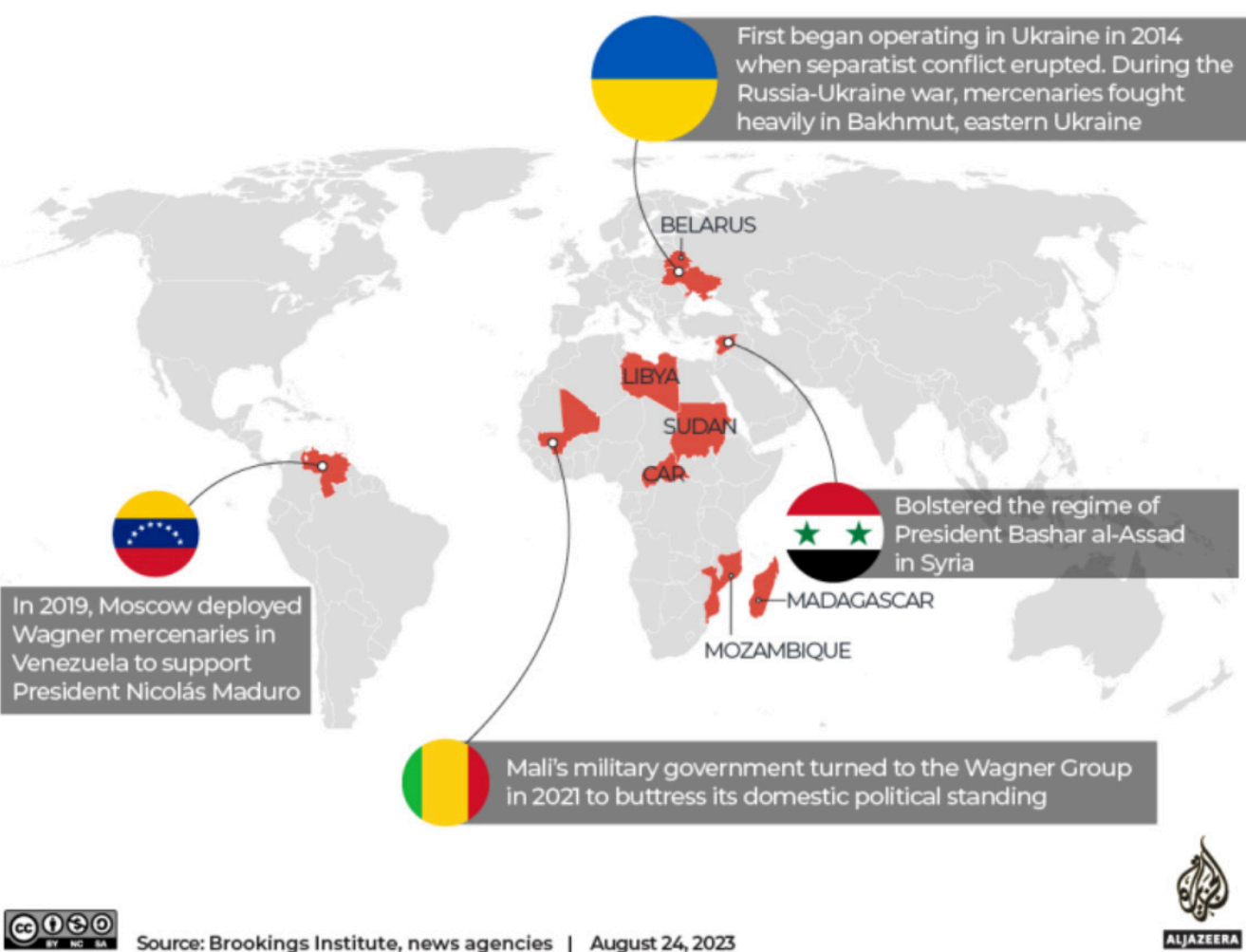
"It does not very much change in places like Mali and CAR because there were already relationships and contracts. And the Russians said they would honour those."

"The real question is what happens in the countries Wagner was trying to expand its presence, places like Burkina Faso and Niger. Will that expansion continue under the Russian government?" Cameron Hudson, a senior associate in the Centre for Strategic and International Studies's Africa programme, said.

RUSSIA

Where has Wagner been most active?

The Wagner Group was founded in 2014 and has operated in Africa, the Middle East, South America and Ukraine. During the 2022 Russia-Ukraine war, the number of fighters grew significantly under Wagner boss Yevgeny Prigozhin.



The brief mutiny in Russia back in June was the climax of a growing schism between Prigozhin and the Ministry of Defence over the handling of the war in Ukraine. But African governments had also been caught in a delicate balancing act between the shadowy mercenary group and the Russian government.

The Malian coup-makers continue to refer to the armed group as "Russian instructors", although

CAR authorities are more forthcoming.

"CAR authorities have always been uncomfortable," Charles Bouessel, senior analyst on CAR for International Crisis Group, said.

"They did not know who to praise for Wagner's assistance. Sometimes, they are thanking the Russian authorities and sometimes, they are thanking Prigozhin. But what they want is that the Russian

assistance continues, and they would be cautious in expressing their opinion [on Prigozhin's death] intimately."

Degree of deniability

OFFICIALS have expressed that their commitment was to Russia and not to the mercenary group itself. Fidele Gouandjika, an adviser to CAR's president, told the media that Prigozhin's death would not change the relationship with Moscow.

Experts have said that even though Prigozhin's charm offensive will be notably absent, the Kremlin will ensure to maintain its influence on the continent.

"There are a lot of Russian institutions benefiting from Russia's presence in Africa and they will want to see those relationships continue," Lechner said.

However, the tussle between Wagner and the GRU, Russia's military intelligence agency, might

recalibrate the diplomatic relationship between African governments and Russia.

"I think they are going to have a rethink of their approach ... Countries that were considering a relationship with Wagner are all going to think if they want the same kind of relationship with Moscow. Because with the Wagner Group, there was some degree of deniability," said Hudson.

Claustrophobic environment

NIGER is the latest country to eye Wagner. Since the presidential guard seized power, it has publicly fallen out with the West. The regional bloc ECOWAS has threatened to invade the country in order to restore President Mohamed Bazoum, who was removed in a coup on July 26.

With Prigozhin's death, Wagner's appeal to new countries seeking Wagner's military assistance might dwindle, but analysts have said the militia can still make inroads into new territories.

"I think we should not be surprised if Wagner still shows up in Niger, even after Prigozhin's death," Lechner said. "We are still in a claustrophobic environment where African governments looking to partner with outside countries on security have relatively few choices."

Since 2020, there have been nine coups in Africa, according to a count by SBM, a geopolitical advisory firm in Nigeria. In this period, five of the 15 ECOWAS member nations are now under military rule.

This spate of coups, experts say, is a recipe for mercenary groups as military governments are pushing to consolidate their grip on power amid pressure from the West, and the decline of democratic governments will continue to invite such private military interventions.

"Illegitimate governments in Africa need security assistance for their hold on power and regime. That is the point of all of these: it is not the supply of armed mercenaries, it is the demand of armed mercenaries," Hudson said.

Al Jazeera

Zimbabwe's Mnangagwa wins second and final term

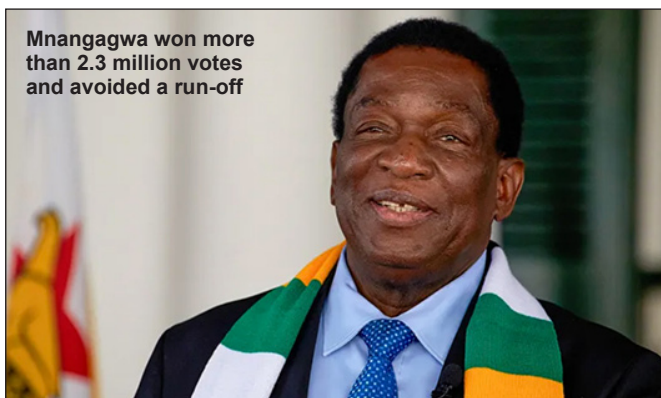
ZIMBABWE'S President Emmerson Mnangagwa has won a second and final term in office in an outcome rejected by the opposition but broadly accepted by observers.

Mnangagwa, who took over from longtime leader Robert Mugabe after a 2017 army coup, was widely expected to secure re-election despite the country's continuing economic crisis.

Analysts say the contest was heavily skewed in favour of the ZANU-PF party, which has ruled the country since independence and the end of white minority rule in 1980.

Mnangagwa won 52.6 percent of the vote compared with 44 percent for Nelson Chamisa, his

Mnangagwa won more than 2.3 million votes and avoided a run-off



main challenger, according to official results announced by the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC).

The elections were marred

by delays that fuelled opposition accusations of rigging and voter suppression. Promise Mkwanzani, a spokesman for the Chamisa's Citizens' Coalition

for Change (CCC), said the party had not signed the final tally, which he described as "false".

"We cannot accept the results," he told the AFP news agency, adding the party would soon announce its next move.

The vote was being watched across southern Africa as a test of support for Mnangagwa's ZANU-PF, whose 43-year rule has been battered by its disastrous management of the economy and charges of authoritarianism.

Foreign poll monitors said the elections had failed to meet regional and international standards.

The head of the European Union's observer mission said

the vote took place in a "climate of fear". Southern African regional bloc SADC's mission noted issues including voting delays, issues with the voter roll, bans on opposition rallies, and biased state media coverage. "The elections were fraught with irregularities and aggrieved the people of Zimbabwe," political analyst Rejoice Ngunyena said.

Chigumba of ZEC said 80-year-old Mnangagwa had won more than 2.3 million votes, while 45-year-old Chamisa had more than 1.9 million.

By securing more than half the votes cast, the president avoided a run-off. Voter turnout was 69 percent.

Al Jazeera and agencies



AGRICULTURAL POLICY UNDER A SOCIALIST PARTY GOVERNMENT

WITHOUT decisive action to remove obstacles to the collection of fair taxes from the mines and reduce the government's need to borrow; without decisive action to explore Zambia's great potential in the agricultural sector by paying particular attention to peasant agriculture and agro processing and linking it to the health and education sector, the UPND government will be unable to create lasting, tangible economic growth or employment.

As we have repeatedly said, the International Monetary Fund deal that this government has pressed its entire hope on will not help us much to address the country's rocketing prices, growing poverty, desperation and joblessness.

Peasant agriculture is one sector that we will prioritise as the Socialist Party in government to create employment. And when we say peasant agriculture, we don't mean that everyone will be carrying a kambwili, hoe and be tillers of land. There's an urgent need to transform the way peasant agriculture is carried out.

We cannot increase agricultural production with a hoe, that's for planting flowers around your house and a few beds of vegetables to feed a small family.

Our plans are much bigger than that and will involve many jobs being created in the agricultural sector because of the transformations we will make.

Transformative peasant agriculture under

this government will need new equipment, that is, appropriate ploughs, planters, harvesters and other necessities. To produce these, we will need to set up factories all over the country employing engineers and their technicians, human resources experts, accountants, IT experts, marketing and sales staff, drivers, mechanics, nurses and clinical officers to run staff clinics, catering people to manage the staff cafeterias, and so on.

Of course, our reality, as it stands today, is that we may not have all the engineering expertise required to set up and run these factories.

We may have to rely on expatriate skills while we train our people in our schools, colleges and universities.

Fred M'membe, Socialist Party President

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EQUITY
PEACE**

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