

Simba Makoni for President 2008 – A Chance for Zimbabwe to move from the polarization of the past and make Zimbabwe to work again.

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Zimbabwe's defining moment

In 2 weeks time, on March 29, 2008, Zimbabweans have a chance to stop their suffering by rejecting the dictatorship in favor of a new dawn in the way they want the affairs of Government to be conducted. While local Government and legislative elections are also very important, the most crucial elections will be that for the Presidency.

Since the 2000 parliamentary elections, Zimbabwe has been a polarized nation – ZANU-PF activists on the one hand and MDC activists on the other. It is interesting to note that while the turnout for the 2000 elections was put at over 70%, subsequent elections saw a decline – 55% in 2002 and 48% in 2005. It can be said that this decline in voter participation was partly due to a significant number of voters leaving the country. I will argue that some Zimbabwean citizens who are not political activists just stayed away from the polls because they had seen that the polarizing message of the two parties in 2002 and 2005 was not providing for their needs.

A New Kind of Politics

In 2005 52% of registered voters did not vote. Yes, a significant number was purposefully disenfranchised through intimidation and the reduction of polling centers in urban areas. I would argue that a significant number needed a different alternative than was available. They wanted a message that is in the middle of the extremes, a message of hope and promise, that Zimbabweans can work together again, whether ZANU-PF, MDC or Independent. There was missing in prior elections, that message that pledges to put Zimbabwe first, before the party and the 'great' party leader.

When I listened to DR Simba Makoni, appealing that the 2008 election be a contest of ideas, not weapons, declaring that no one is worth dying or killing for, I said this is my President. That was a new approach – a denunciation of violence as an instrument of political mobilization. Violence has long been known to be President Mugabe's weapon and sadly there has been talk of the use of violence against opponents even within the MDC itself.

To me Makoni is giving voice to millions of Zimbabwean citizens who are not political activists (ZANU-PF or MDC), and even those in both parties who are in favor of a genuine united platform for all Zimbabweans to make Zimbabwe work again. The people that just want a better life for themselves and their children, not confrontational political activism. Makoni's message is premised on the fact that we are Zimbabweans first, and then secondly we belong to different political groups. Our diversity should not be an impediment that stops us from working together for the good of our country.

In this election, we need to support the vision that magnifies our strengths as a nation, including our political diversity. We need a president that will rise above party politics and harness the talent of all Zimbabweans from different political formations and civil society organizations. Dr Makoni is the only Presidential candidate I have head speak to that vision.

Hijacking the Struggle?

There are those that argue that Dr Makoni is hijacking the struggle, they say Tsvangirai is the man because he has been fighting ZANU-PF for the longest time. This is the same argument that Mugabe has been using, that Zimbabwe has to stick with him no matter what, because he led the struggle for the liberation of the country. While know one can deny Tsvangirai's heroic contribution against President Mugabe's dictatorship, in this election we need to be prospective in our outlook – we need to look at the candidate who is better qualified to govern, a candidate who can bring genuine healing not retribution, we need a center candidate that will bring all Zimbabweans from different political persuasions to work together for the good of the country.

If Zimbabwe center of power remains in the extreme right as it is now, Zimbabwe will not work, at the same time an extreme swing to the left may turn out not to be a change of substance, but a just a change of players. What Zimbabwe needs today is constructive engagement not political posturing. It is my considered view that, that genuine engagement platform is Mabambo-Kusile-Dawn Movement.

Diaspora Influence – Call a Relative Campaign

Millions of Zimbabweans in the diaspora have been disenfranchised. However, we can have our voice heard through our friends and relatives in

Zimbabwe.

Let us join the Call a Relative Campaign – for the next 2 weeks, call a father, mother, brother, sister, grandparents, aunts and uncles, engage them and ask them to vote against the politics of patronage and vote for a new dawn. Ask them to vote against the politics of party leader worship, but for a future premised on working together, the future that will find strength in Zimbabwe's political and cultural diversity. Tell your relatives to vote for a new dawn in Zimbabwean politics, tell them to vote for Dr Simba Makoni for President on March 29, 2008.

If you agree with my thought process, join the campaign; pass this article to a friend, if you don't agree, that is alright, it is your democratic right to have lack of foresight.

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About the Author

I am a Zimbabwean, like many others, hoping for a day that Zimbabwe will work again. <http://zimbabwevotes2008.blogspot.com>
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