



NO THANKS, MWONZORA:

UNPACKING CCC'S

SIKHALA

HYPOCRISY

EDITORIAL



*Nhamo yemumwe hairambirwi sadza.*

Apa tinenge toreva kuti dambudziko  
rawira mumwe wedu ngaaripedze ega.

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**KUKURIGO EDITORS**

# No thanks, Mwonzora: CCC Sikhala Hypocrisy

Last year, Professor Lovemore Madhuku came in for heavy punishment after he remarked that opposition CCC interim chairperson Job Sikhala's predicament was political and required a political solution. Arriving at his intended destination, he helpfully explained that the CCC would have been better off with them in POLAD, a forum the main opposition considers illegitimate, where it would have had the platform to diffuse tensions and deal with issues such as Sikhala's detention.

The blowback was swift, and outraged voices united in condemnation.

CCC spokesperson Fadzayi Mahere taunted on Twitter, pointing out that Professor Madhuku's opinion was at variance with his lectures on constitutional law. Indeed, they were, and perhaps rightly so. He was speaking as a politician and sharing the bitter truth that Sikhala circumstances had a political hand and required political engagement to resolve - realpolitik.

The purist CCC approach smacks of hypocrisy, being newly found. On what basis would politicians that happily cheered, even rendering active operational assistance, to the crocodile as he pulled a fast one on then-president Robert Mugabe in a coup that the opposition movement's leader called a miracle?

It cannot be the case that a military coup is characterised as a miracle sanitised by the divine power, yet at the same time, the idea of negotiating Sikhala's release outside the legal process is somehow beyond the pale.

The refusal to engage substantively on Sikhala's behalf does not appear to be based on principle but on politics. There may indeed be a basis for the view that some in the CCC leadership view the incarceration of the rabble-rousing chairperson as ugly but not entirely unwelcome.

Sikhala's recently published letter appears to support this view.

The letter came two weeks after he wept in court, expressing frustrations at the knowledge that his family had nothing for Christmas. The revelation of the apparent neglect of his family by the party raised a number of eyebrows. There is no good explanation as to why the party, assuming their plea is poverty, has not attempted to fundraise from the public despite being fully aware of Sikhala's predicament.

"With respect, prison teaches one to distinguish real and true friends on the one hand and hypocrites on the other. It opened me and exorcised from me some fallacies and falsehoods I had about some people around me," Sikhala writes, pointing accusatory fingers at his colleagues.

“The University of Chikurubi Maximum Security Prison has revealed to me treacherous hypocrites, sellouts, colluders with my persecution, opportunists trying to capitalise on the predicament of the moment for cheap political and financial gain from my tormentors. Some wished me dead. I am sick. Please, they must then pray for my death.”

His outburst is no doubt born of frustration after seven of detention but may also be true. There have been credible reports from inside the freedom train that news of him being taken ill a few months ago was not greeted with alarmed concern by all comrades. Some reportedly appeared jubilant, believing he had been poisoned and remarking that he had brought it upon himself by ‘trying to be a hero’.

This, coming from Sikhala himself, can no longer be dismissed as the speculation of detractors. Equally revealing is his decision not to name these persons; surely, if he were referring to Zanu PF as his party has claimed, he would have said so. He’s certainly not shy.

Mwonzora no doubt wants to take advantage of his access to President Mnangagwa in an attempt to secure the release of Sikhala and expose his rival, Nelson Chamisa, as ineffective. In the recording published by Newsday, Mwonzora reveals that Sikhala has asked for his help.

This is not the first time that Mwonzora has tried to intervene, only to be accused of seeking political gain

rather than genuinely wanting to help. However, if Mwonzora is able to advocate for Sikhala's release successfully, he should not be criticised for attempting to use the situation to his advantage.

If he has faced criticism for his willingness to engage with Mnangagwa in the past, he should also be allowed to take the credit if the relationship leads to a positive outcome.

It is heartless to prioritise political concerns over Sikhala's freedom. Instead of criticising Mwonzora for visiting Sikhala, people should be encouraging him to do whatever he can to secure Sikhala's release.

The opposite has happened, with the media leading the divisive agitations.

Indeed, one publication reported with seeming malevolence: “Jailed opposition MPs Job Sikhala and Godfrey Sithole on Saturday refused to be seen by MDC-T leader Douglas Mwonzora at Chikurubi Maximum Security Prison. They, however, cited that Mwonzora with the help of some senior prison officials, tried to bulldoze his way into the prison to meet them. But he did not manage to meet them. This was confirmed by their spokesperson Freddy Michael Masarirevu on Sunday in a statement that dismissed Mwonzora’s claims that he met the two at Chikurubi on Saturday.”

It is puzzling why the party would even consider debating



or fighting over Mwonzora's efforts to help Sikhala. Mwonzora has previously represented Sikhala in criminal matters; even now, Sikhala works under Mwonzora's legal practice. It seems unlikely that Mwonzora and Sikhala have suddenly become enemies because of Sikhala's imprisonment.

It appears that Sikhala's fate is being weighed against political interests that fear that Mwonzora's success, however unlikely it may seem, could outshine those who have done little to improve Sikhala's situation beyond offering public prayers.

“I went there to see him and try to help him. Of course, there were people who intervened, and now the poor man is still in prison while others are making thousands of dollars off of him. The Triple C has not even held a small demonstration in solidarity with him, and I find it quite odd and deserving of criticism,” Mwonzora said in the provocative recording.

While certain to draw outrage from the party's aggressive online troopers, Mwonzora's observation that CCC has done nothing meaningful to secure Sikhala's release is not inaccurate. Instead, it has inexplicably focused its most vicious energies not on the judiciary or even President Mnangagwa but on angrily denouncing political rivals who may be able to help. This is a clear example of misplaced priorities.

Mwonzora continued, taking the opportunity to preach his ‘rational disputation’ doctrine, perhaps the first



time it appears to make some sense.

“The problem with the Triple C is that it is not engaging in rational disputation or demonstrating. So what is it doing? It is sitting idly by, and that is a legitimate observation. I'm saying this to people who masquerade as radicals. How come your vice chairman is there, and there isn't a single demonstration? Why?” Mwonzora asked, wasting no time before answering the question.

“The answer is that we are dealing with cowards.

“And I want to tell you that Job Sikhala has sent somebody to say he needs my assistance. Subject to one or two things, I'm going to assist him.”

Mwonzora raises a valid, even if unfashionable, point. It is not reasonable to refuse to engage in any negotiations, claim oneself as the legitimate president, and reject attempts at communication from the other side, even if they are self-serving unless one is fully committed to a radical course of action. This hardline approach will only serve to further polarise the parties involved.

While the party leader has stated that he will only participate in street protests if the Holy Spirit reveals this to him, this stance must be consistent with his other actions.

After exiting Chikurubi Maximum Security Prison,

Mwonzora told reporters that he had met with Sikhala inside.

“This is a political issue that must be resolved politically. We believe that the opposition must show solidarity with each other. We are not perturbed by the false stories appearing on social media and so on. They are designed to drive a wedge within the opposition, but we are not going to fall for that bait.”

Like all politicians, Mwonzora is likely motivated by self-interest. However, this seems to be the nature of politics, as demonstrated by the opposition's endorsement of the coup as a miracle. Rather than dividing society into good and bad people, it may be time for some rational disputation to bring about a more harmonious society.



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