

Crisis within Crisis, Zimbabwe

As We Manufacture Our Own Oppression

Leroy Maisiri

February 7, 2017

Bribery and extortion of the public police and other officials is to fund the Zimbabwean state. The regime destroyed any healthy form of industry and severely cut itself from its financial feeding source. Now they have employed police, city council and Zimra to become state fund-raisers ticketing for almost everything a citizen is supposed to receive from the state but the state cannot provide.

I have been home for exactly 13 days. For the sake of finding a fitting analogy I have always understood Zimbabwe to be like the story of the children of Israel stuck in Egypt under a Pharaoh whose heart had been hardened while we wait to one day wake up in our promised land. This analogy is important for me as it creates specific boundaries, limits my excited imagination and almost grounds the present to a particular past.

In any case the current Zimbabwean crisis has been well documented and so repeating it here won't help. However at the risk of stepping on a few toes I found a Zimbabwe that has become so busy with making bricks even though as further punishment the Pharaoh has taken away the straw needed to make the bricks, with a tall order to continue to produce the same amount of bricks as before.

The regime destroyed any healthy form of industry and severely cut itself from its financial feeding source. Now they have employed police, city council and Zimra to become state fund-raisers ticketing for almost everything a citizen is supposed to receive from the state but the state cannot provide. Somebody needs to take time and balance me here.

These vampires are located on almost every second street corner. Added to this is the liquidity crisis in the country with banks issuing as little as 20 dollars a day per individual who can easily be fined up to 60 dollars in one day for driving to work, for not having 500 dollars to renew a shop licence that the state will issue knowing very well that to raise 500 dollars would take 25 days of standing in long queues in the bank that will only give 20 dollars per day per withdrawal. People have been getting their cars impounded, being charged daily fees. Overall, after a month the fine is equal to you buying another second hand vehicle.

Corruption normally can be quantified when being compared to existing norms. Non corrupt norms must exist to make corruption appear deviant but in a norm-less country where a state of anomie has occurred corruption has become the exchange of breaths, Zimbabwe is the Wild West.

The Pharaoh took away the straw that was needed to make the bricks, and then instructed the slaves to continue making the bricks with their own straw. I remember I was once proud of my country, when I was immature and I didn't know better. That we didn't protest, we didn't fight back. That the regime would do this to us and we as a people would figure out a way around it, call it innovation, call it entrepreneurship. We literally are funding our own oppression, we steal from our children to feed a regime that feeds on our children.

We are that frog that was put in water in a science experiment, and every now and again the scientists would adjust the temperature of the water and the frog in response would adjust its body temperature. The frog never allowed itself to feel the water getting hot. Eventually the frog was boiled alive.

Voting next year won't change a thing, it won't even make a dent to the problem. Stop making bricks, stop funding your own oppression.

Get out of the damn pot!

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