

Calls for diaspora vote grow louder

The Zimbabwe Independent by Silas Nkala

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Chief Felix Ndiweni

MyRight2Vote, a Zimbabwean group led by the dethroned Ntabazinduna Chief Nhlanhlayamangwe Ndiweni, has added its voice to growing calls for the government to permit diaspora vote.

The organisation, in a document seen by the *Zimbabwe Independent* this week, expressed concerns over the government's hypocrisy by enjoying huge diaspora remittances at a time when it does not want those who give it the remittances the opportunity to choose their government representatives through actualising the diaspora vote.

The Zanu PF government has been accused of stifling efforts to ensure the diaspora voted for fear the numerous economic refugees domiciled outside the country could tilt the vote in favour of the opposition.

The group said Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe (RBZ) governor John Mangudya regularly updates Zimbabweans as to how many United States dollars have been brought into the country as remittances by the Zimbabwean diaspora.

Mangudya recently announced that diaspora remittances for 2020 hit US\$1 billion.

"This is very significant. This figure equates to the totality of reserves, which the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe has. It is the full Zimbabwean mortgage, as a country. Our total worth as a country. Profound indeed. Yet this Zimbabwean diaspora is by policy, denied the human Right to vote in all Zimbabwean plebiscites," MyRight2Vote said.

"This position by the government of Zimbabwe amounts to 'Taxation without representation'.

Democracy, by definition, completely rejects such a position. MyRight2Vote seeks to give the Zimbabwean diaspora a voice, since they are taxpayers in Zimbabwe even though they live in the diaspora. In this regard there will be initiatives by MyRight2Vote, the Zimbabwean diaspora and the international arena to effect ethical financial services, with respect to these remittances,” it said.

“The Zimbabwean diaspora are people. They are part of humanity. Being on the African continent, their human rights are protected in the African Union’s Charter on Human and Peoples Rights. Human rights are further protected in the United Nations Charter on Human Rights. This double protection signifies the importance of these rights. It is of great concern that our government chooses to treat these Human Rights with such contempt,” MyRight 2Vote said.

“Venturing to ask our Zimbabwean diaspora, whether they want that human right, that has already been given to all of mankind, a right that humanity has said, every human on earth must have that right, and our government seeks to stand against that human right. The current government must realise that public relations spinning, does not work on every occasion. The Human Right to Vote for the Zimbabwean diaspora is such a matter that cannot be fudged. For it requires a vote that is independent, unconditional, universal, free, fair, transparent and accountable.”

“In such an eventuality the current government intends to take refuge behind what minimal work it has done, in the direction of facilitating a Zimbabwean diaspora vote. Hence MyRight2Vote seeks to educate the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission and the government on how proper elections should be done by independently facilitating the elections for the Zimbabwean diaspora,” the organisation further said.

“When the elections are held in 2023, the demand for the ‘vote’ would have been with the people of Zimbabwe for a century (100 years), in this modern age. For the leaders that fought for the vote, suddenly turned on the people and once more denied them the vote, once in office. Yes, power corrupts as the saying goes. So, the people are stuck in the mud still trying to obtain the vote.”

The group seeks to have the diaspora allowed to vote in legislative and presidential polls in the next general election in 2023.

<https://www.theindependent.co.zw/2021/09/10/calls-for-diaspora-vote-grow-louder/>