

LUNGU DISAGREES WITH CONCOURT... but hasn't stopped ministers who want to pay back - Amos Chanda

By Joseph Mwenda
Special Assistant to the President for Press and Public Relations Amos Chanda says President Edgar Lungu does not agree with the Constitutional Court ruling, but has not stopped former ministers who are willing to pay back from doing so. And Chanda says President Lungu has made it clear that even if the Constitutional Court finds him eligible to recontest the presidency in 2021, the ruling party will not force him to stand if he doesn't want to. Meanwhile, Chanda says the Head of State supports the Political Parties Bill because he wants to see intra-party democracy in the opposition political parties even before they form government. Speaking to News Diggers in an exclusive interview yesterday, Chanda said President Lungu did not agree with the decision made by the ConCourt. He however said the matter had not been tabled in Cabinet. *To page 7*

Gemcanton CEO exposed \$21m scandal before he was deported, says lawyer

By Mukosha Funga
Lawyers representing the deported CEO of Gemcanton Mining Limited Eli Nefussy, have written to Minister

of Home Affairs Stephen Kampyongo demanding that their client be returned to Zambia before they sue the State.

Government suspends 6 accountants

By Mirriam Chabala
Government has suspended six accountants from the Ministries of General Education and Finance to pave way for investigations following revelations of theft in the Auditor General's report. *To page 7*

A joint team of police and immigration officers yesterday captured Nefussy and forcibly put him on an Ethiopian Airways plane, under a deportation order. But Nefussy's lawyer Dickson Jere of Mvunga Associates, disclosed in his letter to Kampyongo that the deported investor recently raised an alarm after discovering that his PF-aligned business associate had spent US\$21 million without any explanation of how the money was used. *To page 3*



PILGRIM: Former Ministry of Health spokesperson who is also former UPND vice-president Dr Canisius Banda posted this photo on his Facebook page, but people close to him say hackers published the private picture without his knowledge. The photograph was however deleted about 15 minutes later. Efforts to contact Dr Banda failed as he did not answer his mobile phone

Govt releases K400 million for farmers

By Mirriam Chabala
Government through the Ministry of Finance has released K400 million to pay farmers who supplied maize to the Food Reserve Agency (FRA) for the 2016/17 farming season. Agriculture Minister Dora Silya disclosed this in Parliament yesterday when she responded to a question from Chinsali PF member of parliament Kalalwe Mukosa who wanted to know how much government was owing farmers for the maize purchased last season. *To page 6*

North Western Province Permanent Secretary Ephraim Mateyo, who is also former Inspector General of Police, today begged Parliamentary Public Accounts Committee (PAC) Chairperson Howard Kunda

I'm first offender, please forgive me, former Inspector General begs PAC

By Mirriam Chabala
North Western Province Permanent Secretary Ephraim Mateyo, who is also former Inspector General of Police, today begged Parliamentary Public Accounts Committee (PAC) Chairperson Howard Kunda

to exercise leniency on him as a first offender. This was after it was revealed that North Western Province used funds intended for the construction of infrastructure to sponsor Provincial Minister Richard Kapita's trips to and from

Lusaka for Cabinet meetings. The development angered PAC members who complained that it was not the

first time that North Western Province was appearing before the Committee for misapplying funds. *To page 5*

No leave for police officers during festive period - IG

Story page 7

By Joseph Mwenda

A combined team of police and immigration officers yesterday morning captured and deported the Chief Executive Officer of Zambia's second biggest emerald mining company, Gemcanton Investments Holdings.

And government sources have told News Diggers! that Eli Neaffusy was picked following a trading dispute with Patriotic Front-aligned shareholders in the company.

Meanwhile, Immigration Department Director General Moola Milomo has refused to explain why Neaffusy was deported saying he is out of office.

Copperbelt Province police commissioner Charity Katanga confirmed the development, but said she did not have details, further referring all questions to Police Spokesperson and Immigration department public relations office.

"I can say I have received such information also, but the problem which is there; why I am not able to give any details is that my officers are not handling that case," said Katanga.

"But I heard that he was taken, so probably the public relations officer from police or immigration may be in a position to comment. Us we will wait for a formal report regarding that issue. But myself as Commission of Police her on the Copperbelt, I have not sent any officer there."

Neaffusy's lawyer Dickson Jere said he was making frantic efforts to find the whereabouts of his client, adding that his phones were unreachable.

But eight hours after the abduction was reported, Jere called back saying his client had been put on Ethiopian Airlines under a deportation order.

"I have just managed to make contact with him. He was calling from an Ethiopian Airline which was about to take off from Ndola. According to him, the people who abducted him were a joint team of police and immigration," Jere explained.

Asked what reasons his client was given, Jere said "he was told that his business partner and shareholder reported him as a danger to the country and that his three-year work permit should be cancelled."

Jere said the deported Israeli investor had been working in harmony with the Zambian government in accordance with the foreign investment guidelines, hence he could not understand the hostility from the State towards Neaffusy.

And sources with government told News Diggers! that there had been a bitter quarrel between Neaffusy and his Zambian partner of Senegalese origin Abdoulaye Ndiaye, popularly known as Gounasse.

"This guy they have picked has been trying to put proper company structures in place and a legal system of trading. They have invested so much money and brought serious machinery which is running 24 hours at the mine. Gemcanton is now competing 50-50 with Kagem. They auction the gemstones in India and other places around the world, which has never happened before," the sources said.

They said the Israelis acquired 50 per cent stake in the company, but had faced victimization from state agencies since.

"When they came in these Israelis bought about 50 per cent stake in Gemcanton,

State captures, deports mining CEO of Gemcanton

but along the way a dispute ensued between Gounasse and Neaffusy. Now the problem is that Gounasse boasts of having financed the PF campaigns. He claims that several ministers are on his payroll, including State House official," reported the sources.

"So now, Gounasse prefers to sale the gemstone on the black market, while these Israelis want to trade the stones through government established auction

market, because their parent company in Israel does not support black market trading. In fact, there is one auction coming up just next month. So this deportation is to prevent the stones from being auctioned at Pamodzi Hotel, which means they won't pay tax to ZRA on the sale."

The sources said the PF had a hand in the deportation of Neaffusy because he was making it hard for the ruling

party-aligned shareholder in the company to generate campaign finances ahead of the 2021 general elections.

Meanwhile, Milomo refused to comment on the deportation.

"I am not in the office, I am out of office now. But you can call our public relations officer because I am not in the office," Milomo said.

When told that Immigration public relations manager Namati Nshinka had not been

picking up calls, Milomo said "Oh, okay, I am sorry, I am out of office, I am attending a meeting in Livingstone."

Asked if he was briefed about Neaffusy's deportation yesterday, Milomo insisted that he could not comment on the matter.

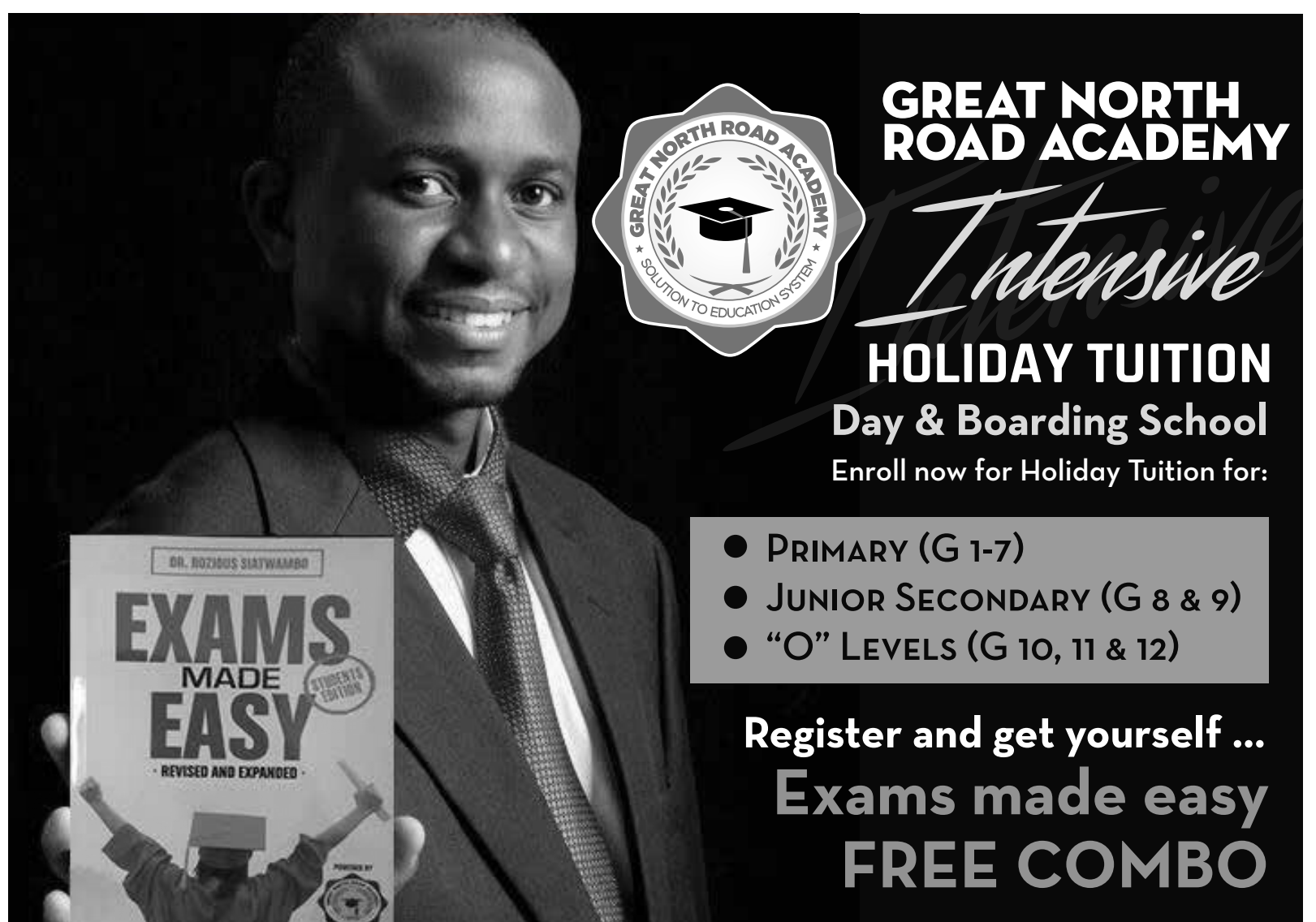
"I am out of the office Madam, I wouldn't comment, I am in Livingstone," said Milomo.

Meanwhile, neither Nshinka nor Minister of Home Affairs

Stephen Kampyongo answered phone calls by press time.

According to Bloomberg News, the Zambia Patents and Company Registration Agency (PACRA) shows Gemcanton as jointly owned by two companies: British Virgin Islands-based Frango Finance Ltd. and Wolle Mining Limited.

It was formally known as Grizzly mining company and had been digging emeralds in Zambia since 1997.



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Gemcanton CEO exposed \$21million scandal before he was deported - lawyer

From front page

"We are informed by our client that he was abducted on November 28, 2017 by a combined team of security officers who included the immigration officers. They nabbed him from his apartment at the Gemcanton Mine premises in Lufwanyama District in the early hours of the morning. He was kept under incommunicado and not allowed to contact his lawyers or take his medicines for his heart condition. It was only in the afternoon when he was told that he will be deported and taken to the Ethiopian airline flight at Simon Mwansa Kapwepwe Airport in Ndola. To date our client has not been told the reasons for his deportation when he held a valid investor permit to work in Zambia," Jere wrote.

"We wish to bring to your attention the fact that our client had sharp differences with one of the directors at the mine, a Mr Abdoulaye Ndiaye commonly known as 'Gounasse' over the management of the mine. Our client who was out of the country for a while and only returned to the mine on the 23rd of November 2017 and immediately discovered unexplained expenditure of over \$21 million. He immediately raised alarm and asked for an explanation. However, the following day, Mr Ndiaye wrote a letter asking him to resign from his position as joint CEO under the pretext that he was under investigation by the police." He said to the contrary, police had already investigated and

cleared Nefussy.

"You may be aware that the Inspector General of Police Mr Kakoma Kanganja did investigate our client of any possible wrong doing and he cleared him through a letter dated 2nd November, 2017. You may wish to know that our client has gone through various forms of

intimidation and threats from Mr Ndiaye. For example, our client has always demanded that security guards should be appointed from among Zambians but Mr Ndiaye has opted to employ people from Senegal at great expense to the company. Currently, there are over 70 heavily armed security guards

from Senegal when such jobs can be done by Zambians," he said.

"Honorable Minister you are at liberty to visit the mine and speak to the workers and their trade union representatives and get the truth of what is going on." He demanded that his client should be brought back.

"We therefore write to ask your office to immediately reverse the deportation of our client and allow him to come back and continue working as CEO of the mine. Our client is aware of the so called connections which Mr Ndiaye is claiming to have among government officials but such unbridled

allegations only go to tarnish the name of the President and his government, and must be stopped," said Jere.

"We wait to hear from you within seven days from the date of this letter of we will launch a requisite court action in the High Court of Zambia against the unreasonable deportation of our client."



Diploma in defence and security studies students during their graduation ceremony held at Zambia National Service (ZNS) officer's mess in Lusaka's Chamba Valley on November 29, 2017 - Picture by Tenson Mkhala

Court acquits UPND cadres: magistrate says police provoked them

By Diggers Reporter

The Lusaka Magistrates' Court has acquitted 10

UPND cadres of riotous behavior charges saying police provoked them by tear-

gassing them. Lubinda Simonda and nine others were arrested on

December 15, 2016 after the presidential election petition when they went

to show solidarity to their leader Hakainde Hichilema and his vice Geoffrey Bwalya Mwamba.

Magistrate Nthandose Chabala set free all the accused persons free due to failure by the prosecution to prove a case against the cadres.

She said there was no evidence to warrant her to place the cadres on their defense.

The court said police were the ones who provoked the cadres by tear-gassing them which lead to the fracas

She said no one saw any of the accused destroying property at the High Court adding that the arresting officer was not even at the premises when the incident happened.

Judiciary administrator Kelgin Limbani had claimed in his testimony that the cadres overpowered the police officers at the courts whilst Judiciary chief administration officer Nalishebo Imata also based her evidence on hearsay as she was not present during the confusion.

In this case Lubinda Simonda, 35, Namasiku Kalaluka, 21, Dereck Sikakando, 22, Philemon Mbewe, 64, Emmanuel Malilwe, 24, Ackim Bote, 56, Alfred Habene, 64, Progress Simubali, 45, Nyambe Nalikena, 21 and Chipso Sichimu were charged with riotous behaviour.

Sexual harassment victims need counselling - FES

By Zondiwe Mbewe

ZCTU secretary general Cosmas Mukuka says the union is saddened by high levels of sexual harassment in workplaces.

And Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES) programme manager Kathy Short says sexual harassment victims need counseling because it leaves psychological scars.

Meanwhile, International Labour Organisation national project coordinator Elizabeth Simanda says GBV must come to an end because it leaves the victims traumatized for the rest of their lives.

The trio was speaking during the launch of a campaign against workplace GBV under the theme 'Leave no one behind, end Gender Based Violence now'.

Mukuka observed that many women were being harassed for fear of losing their jobs.

"ZCTU is saddened by the high levels of sexual harassment in the workplace due to fear of losing a job by the victims. Two thirds of women are experiencing violence are in a job. I want to urge trade unions, women and feminist organisations and others to come together in advocating or pushing for laws that will make it clear that violence and harassment are not part of the job," Mukuka said.

"We call on all victims of sexual harassment to speak out in line with our policy on sexual harassment. We call upon all unions to set up structures that will protect workers and union

members from sexual harassment in the workplace and union."

Mukuka implored government to tighten punishment against perpetrators of GBV.

"We demand that government tightens punishment against perpetrators of Gender Based Violence if the country is to eradicate this vice. Government must increase budgetary allocation towards monitoring and eradication measures and ensure that these measures are having an impact on eliminating GBV. Failure to do this will mean our government is condoning the ongoing and worsening experience of GBV for women and children in our country. We are concerned that issues dealing with violence against women and children are not receiving adequate attention from authorities. It is time government and communities play a meaningful role in the eradication of the scourge of GBV," said Mukuka.

And Short said sexual harassment victims need counseling.

"According to recent research by the University of Zambia, findings showed sexual harassment in Zambian workplaces is very high with 69 percent of respondents claiming that they are victims. The other 75 percent were not aware of any sexual harassment policies in their workplace and that sexual harassment exists in various forms. These findings imply that female employees are being subjected to unsafe work environments that can affect their emotional and physical health. It also

implies that sexual harassment is embarrassing, humiliating behaviour which has no place in our modern society," Short said.

"We need to put our heads together, we need to work together to address this issue. This evil vice in the workplaces is unacceptable because it leaves a lot of psychological scars on the victims. And I must hasten to mention that it is not only women that are victims of sexual harassment. Sexual violence cannot go on in this 21st century. In most cases in Zambia we have not used psychological help and counselling which is needed for the victims. Therefore, we would like to implore the government of the Republic of Zambia to ensure that such facilities are available for the victims to go and have some counselling. Victims need someone who will not judge them but will listen to them. And to the victims, both men and women, please let's speak out. Let's not remain silent because this vice if left unchecked will affect our future generation."

Meanwhile, Simanda said GBV left victims traumatized for the rest of their lives.

"GBV makes the victim to be traumatized for the rest of her or his life. That is why we are all standing up today to support this launch so that we can bring GBV to an end in Zambia in collaboration with government. GBV affects all, women, men and children. It is an issue for everyone. I am managing a program of GBV and I see people being abused every day," said Simanda.

Lungu's desire to hold on to power will cause political instability - EIU

By Mirriam Chabala

The Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) says Zambia will face substantial threats to its political stability during the 2018-2022 period due to President Edgar Lungu's desire to prolong his stay in office. And the EIU has observed that dialogue talks between President Lungu and opposition UPND leader Hakainde Hichilema are likely to be unsuccessful due to lack of common ground over the 2016 presidential elections. According to the EIU country report, Zambia's political stability from 2018 to 2022 was unpredictable.

"Zambia will face substantial threats to political stability in 2018-22. Much of this stems from what is for Zambia an unusual degree of tension under the presidency of Edgar Lungu. The treason charges against Hakainde Hichilema, leader of the UPND have only been dropped under a nolle prosequi, which means that the prosecution will proceed no further but that he can be re arraigned at any time. Mr Hichilema has also reiterated his commitment to overturning the results of the 2016 general election which he claims was fraudulent, even though these claims are the most likely reason why he was charged with treason in the first place. The Commonwealth has brokered talks between Mr Hichilema and Mr Lungu but in the absence of any common ground over the 2016 election, these talks are unlikely to succeed," the report read.

The EIU observed that the 2021 election time would be yet another volatile period for the country due to President Lungu's unwillingness to leave office.

The EIU projected that President Lungu could win the



2021 elections if the ConCourt deemed him eligible to stand again due to the odds stacked against the opposition political parties and a repressive political environment that they were subjected to. "The 2021 election season will be another volatile period, during which the government will look to narrow the political space aggressively. Extra

security powers should help to bolster overall stability, but they will nonetheless reinforce widespread perceptions that Zambia is staggering into autocracy, keeping tensions very high throughout the forecast period and resulting in frequent low-level clashes and violence. Besides relations with the opposition, intra-governmental divisions will

keep policy unpredictable, with a vocal conservative faction of the ruling Patriotic Front having long been skeptical of the president and his choice of cabinet. To cement his position, Mr Lungu is likely to enact a purge against this caucus, which will prove a distraction to the functioning of government while it lasts, but later on it should work

to avoid internal instability. For example, in the run up to the 2020 PF presidential nomination," the report read. "The next presidential and legislative elections are due in August 2021. The most recent presidential and legislative polls, held in August 2016, were marred by violence primarily between security forces and opposition supporters as

well as intimidation of media outlets and voices critical of the government. The violence and intimidation have injured Zambia's image as one of Africa's stronger democracies. Assuming that Mr Lungu is deemed eligible to stand again in 2021, and with the odds stacked against the opposition in a repressive environment, The Economist Intelligence Unit expects him to win a second full term as president." Meanwhile, the report stated that the country was likely to experience more political unrest should the courts rule that President Lungu is eligible to stand in 2021.

"Emergency security powers have been dropped, which will allow for calm over the short term despite low-level anti-government protests over corruption, which will be a frequent phenomenon. Over the longer run there are several potential flash points that stand to stir more serious unrest and provide justification for the reimposition or extension of emergency powers. Such unrest is likely to be triggered, for example, if the judiciary were to deem Mr Lungu eligible to stand for another term in office in 2021 something the opposition roundly rejects," read the EIU report.

Ministry of Health records 18 new cholera cases

By Zondiwe Mbewe

Ministry of Health Head and Communications

External Relations Stanslous Ngosa has announced that 18 new cholera cases have

been recorded at Chipata, Kanyama and Matero level one hospitals.

In a statement today, Ngosa stated that this brought the total number of cases to

334 since the outbreak was declared on October 6.

"Eighteen (18) new cholera cases have been recorded at Chipata (14), Kanyama (3), and Matero (1) Level I Hospitals bringing the cumulative number to 334 cases since the outbreak was declared on October 6, 2017. 27 patients are currently receiving treatment at the health facilities; 10 at Chipata, 5 at Kanyama and 12 at Matero. Ministry of Health has continued providing health promotion messages and provision of chlorin through the multi-disciplinary taskforce on Cholera," Ngosa stated.

He stated that the ministry was optimistic that with increased sensitisation, the outbreak would be contained. "Cholera thrives in the dirty environment hence the need to practice hygiene. Food should be properly covered and heated before eating. Washing hands after using the toilet and before handling food should be part of the culture, everywhere and at all times. The Ministry remains optimistic that with concerted effort, responsibility at individual and community levels, the outbreak will be contained," stated Ngosa.



A migrant stands in a packed room at the Tariq Al-Matar detention centre on the outskirts of Tripoli, Libya - AFP

I am a first offender, please forgive me, former IG begs PAC

From front page

After reading and submitting the ministry response to the 2016 Auditor General's queries before the committee, the Chairperson asked members to ask questions of clarification and Milenge member of parliament Mwansa Mbulakulima was first. "PS, last year we belaboured these issues of misapplication and we thought we had put it to rest, if you recall, you had more than K821 544 of the general deposit funds which included funds for constructing Chiefs palaces and this year, we are doing the same issue of misapplication of funds. This year the misapplication of funds has even gone up to K1.2 million which is actually K1.3 million. Now, the original purpose was for community development, forestry and social welfare but the funds were applied to administrative duties such as Parliamentary work and yet there were more pressing issues. Now, in your submission which I find not in tune on page two, you have said that the controlling officer is in charge of funds released under the Head 97. Therefore, funds for activities such as budgeting and capturing of estimates are drawn from various departments because they cut across all the departments under its charge. Chairperson I find this to be out of tune, meaning there is no remorse. So you can play around with the funds the way you feel like because you are the controlling officer and yet the Public Finance Act clearly stipulates how public funds should be spent," Mbulakulima said.

"Now can you show this committee the values that you used to evaluate the money because you were under pressure as explained but you are an expert in public finance so indicate to us just three efforts that you made to the Secretary to the Treasury wanting to vary the resources because you were under pressure? Then you have also said that you are in charge of funds released, but who else is in charge of looking for resources for the Province? Because if you are in charge of spending, then you are also in charge of bringing the money." PS Mateyo:

Chair, in response to the observation raised by the honourable Mbulakulima. There are times when we experience very pressing problems like for example if the minister is required to come to Cabinet meetings here in Lusaka, because this time they were coming to Cabinet meetings. I thought it to myself (I might have thought wrongly) that it was an urgent issue to facilitate the movement of the minister to come to attend to these national issues in the hope that next month, funding was going to be provided to the Province and reimburse... I think that is exactly the position that I can give you. Teddy Kasonso:

I would like to go a bit further than the controlling officer in this case. Sir, where was the internal auditor for this Province because the internal auditor should have stopped this payment to allow funds to be released and used by the minister to come to Lusaka to attend meetings? You knew that you had not obtained authority. You should be the first advisors to the PS, you are not helping him. So PS the defence you are giving is not sufficient, you had a very good reason to seek for authority from the Secretary to the treasury but you did not and it appears to me that your officers are not helping you. So the committee here is saying why didn't you seek authority when you had a good reason of not being funded?

Acting provincial principle accountant John Kalumba:

"The problem of erratic funding started in 2015 and slipped over into 2016. We do not have any evidence that we wrote to the Secretary to the treasury to vary the funds, but even the Secretary to the Treasury would throw out that request and this is the reason why we couldn't write to the treasury because we had a view in 2016 that when the funds will be available, we are going to cover the funds which we are going to use.

Director accountant Kalumba: Actually, I am at loss of words when it comes to the issue under discussion because the regulations are clear and from the observations that have been made by the honourable members, it's not an option to

follow regulations and clearly if you have financial challenges as a Province, the financial regulations act gives you the procedure to follow and if it's an issue of emergency nature or whether its just a normal situation, procedure is there and we are supposed to adhere to the regulations stipulated in financial regulations act which we didn't do in this case. So what my colleague is putting up might not be defence, I am sorry.

PAC Chairman Kunda:

PS is that the kind of advice you are getting from your officer who is supposed to advice the way things are supposed to go according to the regulations, is that the kind of advice you are getting from your officers?

PS: Chair Sir, it's very very difficult to respond to your observation because these are the officers that are operating within my office. Expect, as honourable Kasonso has said, to get the best out of them. I think it was just maybe the language and lack of experience from my officer.

Kunda: PS, do you understand the financial irregularities yourself?

PS: Sir, it's very difficult to say yes or no but these are acts we always read but its circumstantial situations where you are confronted with a situation which leads you definitely to really go out of bounds and do what you may consider to respond to a government request or directive from State House to say the minister is

required.

Kunda:

Yeah, we understand that PS you can do variations, you can vary the funds but there is a procedure to follow and that procedure is to obtain the authority from the treasury before you do so using the money... Planner, do you understand the financial regulations?

Planner Chabu Mundewe:

I would say yes and I would say no but what I know is that every time you want to vary, we like to do it this way.

Nkana MP Alexander Chiteme:

I don't know if I am disappointed or just upset because the PS seated here was here again when we were discussing the same Auditor's report and this misapplication for funds was very much active and paramount and I was belabouring just like I am doing today and I even asked that same day if he had capacity to organise the members of is province and he agreed that he had the capacity. I am so disappointed that we could have a lukewarm answer of saying 'maybe I understand or maybe I don't' I think that is a bit disappointing and to say that the application to the treasury was overlooked.

Kunda:

PS, why is it that we are going to be talking about the same things and it is not changing? And now we are talking about the financial act which we talked about even last time you appeared on this committee.

Nsenga Hill MP Kapembwa Simbao:

I have been wondering as to why North Western Province has been addressed in the manner other Provinces have been addressed when it has been said that the Province was underfunded with only 34 per cent. Has the PS bothered to find out from finance why he has not been fully funded and ended up in this problem?

PS:

As much as they are directed to me sir here we are working as a team, maybe my planner has an observation, on top of that. May I have your permission sir to engage him?

Kunda:

No, the permission is not granted because we want you to address these issues. These are very serious issues PS, especially on this one where the Province is not receiving funding.

PS:

Honourable Chair, the funding towards North Western is always inadequate and they are always saying that the money at the treasury is not enough. We haven't been quite idle, no sir. We have been presenting these issue at our meetings as PSs and we have also been presenting as to why this commitment to say that North Western will receive K30 million but you find that down the line Sir you don't receive even any allocation for maybe three months.

For example I may go out of bounds, we have two districts that have been created, as I am talking to you Sir, we have been to ministry of finance thats is Mushindamo and Kalumbila where Honourabel Kasonso

is member of parliament. We have been requesting for treasury authority. The minister of the province has been sitting with Honourable Mutati on a number of occasions, we have written, I have written to finance.

Kunda:

Are you able to provide that information to show us because we want to help you.

PS:

Yes, I am ready that I can provide because there is a writing to that effect and there has been no response. To the treasury in fact the minister was even promising that the treasury was going to be written to but nothing has happened to now.

Kunda:

PS, we have heard you and I think you should also start adhering to some of our recommendations before we start evoking some of the provisions.

PS:

Thank you Chair, I think we have heard and going forward I promise you that we are going to adhere to the recommendations for the committee but please forgive us and for me in particular because I am a first offender. And when a person admits and pleads guilty, what follows next is sentence, so we are sorry please have leniency on me.

Kunda:

We have heard you, please switch off your microphone and I would want to start spending time with your officer so that you understand some of these things.



President Edgar Lungu congratulates his Kenyan counterpart Uhuru Kenyatta during his inauguration ceremony yesterday - picture courtesy of State House

Govt releases K400 million for farmers who sold maize to FRA

From front page

“Mr Speaker, the marketing season for the Food Reserve Agency came to an end on 27th October, 2017. The agency purchased 516,863 metric tons of maize valued at K620,235,720 from 603,55 farmers. As of the K 620,235,720, the value of the purchased maize, K103,241,130 has been paid to 14,580 farmers already leaving a balance of K516,994,590. As of today, the Ministry of Finance released K400 million to pay the farmers and the Ministry of Agriculture this afternoon begun moving this money to the FRA for onwards disbursement to the farmers and this will leave a balance of only K117 million which we also expect to pay the farmers in the next few days. Mr Speaker, the delay [in releasing the funds] was caused by Treasury constraints,” Siliya said.

And Siliya said government owed transporters K200 million.

“I think we have worked very hard to ensure that we dismantle the debt owed to transporters. Latest this morning is that we owe transporters is K200 million which is manageable compared to where we are coming from and we will continue to engage the Minister of Finance because in the last few days we have been talking about ensuring that government is ready to counterpart funding for the e-voucher and that government pays farmers for

the maize supplied to FRA so that they can also begin to make their contributions and we also dismantle the debt owed to transporters,” Siliya said.

She reiterated that government would support one million farmers on its e-voucher FISP programme this season.

“Mr Speaker, last year under the e-voucher FISP programme only 6,000 were supported by government and the other one million were supported using the conversational FISP but and this year in the 2017/18 farming season, all the one million farmers will be supported using the e-voucher,” said Siliya.



Give FIC powers to name criminals, don't intimidate them - CTPD

Miriam Chabala

CTPD executive director Isaac Mwaipopo says instead of moves to weaken the Financial Intelligence Center, government must strengthen it by giving it the mandate to name institutions and individuals involved in illicit financial flows.

Commenting on revelations that some criminals were threatening to clump down operations of the FIC, Mwaipopo described the intentions as unacceptable.

“This is unacceptable and must be stopped. Civil society stands ready to partner with

key institutions like FIC in promoting transparency and accountability. If Zambia is to attain any of the priorities set out in the 7th National Development Plan, it has to begin by taking seriously work being done by FIC and other similar institutions like the auditor General's Office. It beats logic to be complaining about IMF delaying to come to our aid, when we are failing to close loopholes that lead to illicit financial flows. We urge the government to consider further strengthening FIC so that it can be going a step further by naming and

publishing the individuals and institutions they submit to investigative wings and this will greatly help the local communities and general public to learn more and get involved in demanding for transparency,” Mwaipopo said. “Threats to clump down the operations of the Financial Intelligence Centre should not be entertained. It's actually very saddening to hear that there are individuals that are threatening the existence of key institutions promoting transparency and helping the public know the many suspicious dealings of

individuals and cooperate institutions. According to the Financial Intelligence Centre Act No 46 of 2010, the Centre was set up as the central national agency for receiving, requesting, analyzing and disseminating intelligence reports relating to suspicious financial transactions, bordering on money laundering, terrorist financing and other serious crimes. This is critical as it helps in promoting transparency and accountability.”

He said if government wanted institutions like the IMF to take their requests seriously, they must protect institutions like the Auditor General's office and the FIC.

“CTPD's expectation from every well-meaning Zambian who wants to see the best for this country is to render support to this strategic institution. In fact, if the government wants institutions like the International Monetary Fund to take their requests for a bailout package seriously, they should demonstrate interest in protecting and promoting work being done by institutions like the Financial Intelligence Centre and the Auditor General's Office,” he said.

“The silence from the gate keepers and custodians of public interest is worrying and a serious betrayal to the trust and confidence the people had when they entrusted them with power to perform duties on behalf of the citizens. It's disheartening that we now live in a country where abuse and failure to account for public funds is the new normal and institutions that are meant to safeguard public interest are now more proactive in pursuing people that are perceived to hold different political persuasions than the real enemies of progress cited in key national documents like

the auditor general's report and financial trends reports.”

Mwaipopo urged government to focus on acting on the revelations of the FIC.

“As highlighted in the recent FIC public engagement, the country should be more worried that some of the companies getting public contracts, their ownership is very opaque and unknown. The names of the companies differ from the people claiming to be owners, this potentially means that some of those companies are surrogates. This calls for formulation and enactment of legislation that promotes transparency on who the beneficial owners really are, especially that revelations suggest that some of the companies they investigated got government contracts and are not registered for tax while some belong to politically exposed individuals who front surrogates to conduct business on their behalf,” Mwaipopo said.

He however disagreed with those asking government to give FIC powers to prosecute saying there were enough law enforcement agencies already.

“We have also noted that there are actually calls from some sections of society suggesting that FIC must be given more powers to prosecute individuals they identify to be on the other side of the law. We do not agree with this suggestion as we think it might compromise the original mandate of FIC. Moreover, Zambia has more than enough institutions that can prosecute individuals or cooperates cited in reports on public finance systems and management. The challenge is around the failure for these institutions to operate according to the mandate they were established for which creates a big gap in the financial management system,” said Mwaipopo.

Thieves should not be allowed to continue serving in govt office - Antonio

By Miriam Chabala

FDD deputy national secretary Antonio Mwanza has called for the suspension, arrest and prosecution of all public officers cited in the Auditor General's report for embezzling national resources.

In a statement today, Mwanza expressed disappointment with Public Service Commission chairperson Dickson Chasayais remarks that government would recover all misappropriated monies from erring officers

through salary deductions. “We are shocked with the sentiments of the Chairperson of the Public Service Commission, Mr Dickson Chasaya that government will not arrest and prosecute civil servants who have stolen public resources but will instead endeavour to recover all monies misappropriated from erring officers as cited in the Auditor General's report through salary deductions. We are deeply disappointed that a man who

has been charged with the responsibility of ensuring accountability, transparency and integrity in the civil service is actually the one in the forefront of tolerating and encouraging abuse of public resources. How on God's earth can a thief be allowed to continue serving in office when he has been found wanting?” Mwanza wondered.

Mwanza demanded for the arrest everyone abusing public resources arguing that people could not continue living poverty because of thieves in government who were stealing from them.

“Mr Chasaya ought to know that Article 250 of the Republican Constitution as well as the Public Finance Act and other written law clearly stipulates that thieves must be arrested and prosecuted for theft and abuse of public funds. As FDD, we demand for the immediate suspension, arrest and prosecution of all public officers that have been cited in the Auditor General's report.

We cannot allow the wanton abuse and theft of public resources to continue unabated when our country is under serious fiscal stress. The money that is being misappropriated by those criminals could go a long way in ensuring improved service delivery and alleviation of poverty,” he stated.

Mwanza stated that arresting officers cited in the AG's report was the right thing to do because it would serve as a deterrent to others who were in the habit of embezzling public resources.

“It is this laizzer faire attitude towards corruption and abuse of public resources by those that have been charged with the responsibility of safeguarding our national coffers that is encouraging corruption and wanton abuse of public resources. We want all those erring officers suspended, arrested and prosecuted so that they can serve as a deterrent to others who are in the habit of embezzling public funds,” stated Mwanza.



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Govt suspends 6 accountants from Ministry of General Education, Finance over theft

From front page

The Auditor General's report for the year ended 2016 revealed that a Ministry of General Education employee paid himself a total of K2,577,055 in the year ended 2016, for unexplained purposes.

According to the Auditor General, a Bwalya L Phiri used different initials on nine occasions to draw money from a Ministry of General Education account, in an attempt to conceal the fraud. Meanwhile, two of his colleagues also paid themselves K871,272 in similar circumstances.

Winding up debate on the budgetary allocation to his ministry for the 2018 financial year, Minister of Finance Felix Mutati told Parliament that four of the suspended accountants work for the Ministry of General Education while the other two were from his ministry.

"With regard to the current Auditor General's report, Chairperson you may wish to know that we have taken decisive action in the Ministry of Transport and Communication, we have recalled the performance for \$6.9 million for non delivery of the dredgers including taking additional measures by the law enforcement agencies. In addition Chairperson you may wish to know that in the Ministry of General Education, we have put in forensic audit suspending four accountants at general education and also suspending two accountants at the Ministry of Finance because the intention is that you cannot take away the people's money. Chairperson, those that took money, we have also instituted recoveries for all the monies that were taken. What we are saying

Chairperson is that we are not going to tolerate the sanctuary of financial mischief and financial misuse," Mutati said. He said prudent management of resources was important. "As government, the prudent management of resources is important. Ensuring that we secure budget credibility and also ensuring that we

improve the use of the limited resources to create impact not only on growth but also to be able to push the involvement of the private sector. We think these are critically important and in so doing, in the area of prudent financial management, next year we will put in the questions that were raised by honourable members

of parliament [during their debates on the budget] in order to anchor prudence in law and also prudence in regulations." Mutati said government would continue tightening the law to ensure that it caught up with culprits.

"But prior to putting in the new Act, we must act now and we are putting in decisive action

to arrest the misdemeanor that has been reported by the Auditor General in the current auditor General's report that is being debated, so government is decisive on this particular matter Chairperson. In conclusion Chairperson, I just want to say that the moderate achievement that we have made thus far is because of the

collective wisdom of all of us and I would like to highlight Chairperson that we all have different views about this but that is the core and essence for a democratic society but what is fundamental is that we must have a common agenda. A collect agenda which focuses on developing the country," said Mutati.

PF won't force Lungu to stand in 2021 if he does not want to - State House

From front page

"Cabinet proceedings are always recorded in the minutes. I have not seen that item in the minutes of the last Cabinet meeting. The decisions of Cabinet last week, were announced by acting chief government spokesperson Stephen Kampyongo. The President has no position on that matter," Chanda said. "However, he disagrees with the ruling of the Constitutional Court, but he has no further position. Ministers who choose to pay or not to pay are individual ministers and the President has nothing against them. Indeed, one would argue that if the ministers were illegally in office, how does that exclude the Vice-President? The Vice-President is also a minister on the basis of her being a member of Parliament. So, really the question is, is it in doubt that for the period that they were in office they worked? They worked. But the President has respected the decision of the court, even if he does not agree with it.

He further wondered why the Speaker of the National Assembly, who was a transition officer, would have power to act as President through a disputed election petition.

"Dr Matibini was a transitional Speaker, and the first order of business for Parliament is to elect the Speaker. Meaning he wasn't MP, so how would he be more legitimate to hold power as acting President than the person who was outgoing and elected - forget about whether he is disputed or not."

And in explaining President Lungu's statement in which he said "I am only going upto 2021", Chanda said the PF will not force him to stand if he decides not to.

"The President is a lawyer, and this is why sometimes we sit down ourselves and wonder why people want to debate where there is no debate. What does the Constitution say about the term of office when you are elected and sworn-in? Five years. He was sworn-in in 2016 and that five years finishes in 2021, so the

President was simply stating a legal fact, a reality that his term of office ends in 2021. Now, because of the matter being in court, we are actually constrained to explain exactly what we mean. I was flooded with questions to explain a very simple sentence, it was very simple, but it appeared controversial in the light of the ongoing debate in the public domain. I was actually itching to put this debate to an end, but I cannot do that without risking interfering with the decision that is due in the court. But after that, we will go back to that statement. We are eager actually for the Constitutional Court to make its statement," Chanda said.

"But I can also take you back to what the Vice-President said in Parliament. The Central Committee prefers him as its candidate in future elections, but she was very clear that the decision is President Lungu's to make. To run or not to run, the President will make that decision himself. I think she was very clear. There was no further clarifications from State

House because we thought the President's statement was clear. Mr Davies Mwila says the Central Committee has chosen him, but after the court matter, whichever way it finishes, the President will make the decision. So if there is a decision to be made, it tells you a lot of things. Even if you want him to stand and he doesn't want, will you force him? Even if the Constitutional Court rules that he is eligible to stand but he doesn't want, he will not stand. Are they going force him? No one will force him to stand. But there is a picture [being portrayed] that his candidature depends on the decision of the Constitutional Court."

Asked if President Lungu would respect the ConCourt's decision if he was disqualified, considering the remarks he made in Solwezi, Chanda said the Head of State was willing to go back to Chawama "even tomorrow". "The President is very clear. If his presidency came to an end tomorrow, he is very clear that he will go back to Chawama at his farm and continue with

his life. He says very clearly that he wasn't born in State House and this power thing doesn't torture him at all. The absence of power doesn't torture him because he has surrendered power before, he has given it up and gotten it back legally. So he is not bothered about the outcome of the Constitutional Court, whichever way it goes," he said.

Asked if the President was in good enough health to continue upto 2026 if allowed to contest, Chanda said the Head of State was physically and mentally fit, but the decision to stand was at his discretion.

"Every morning he wakes up at 5AM, he does five-10 kilometres and eight different exercises. He is extremely fit and capable. His mental state is at its best, his physical state has no encumbrances whatsoever. But to run or not to run will be his decision," Chanda explained.

Meanwhile, Chanda said President Lungu believes that Zambia's democratic values need to be entrenched in all political parties, and that the Political Parties Bill would help achieve that.

"Generally, State House and the President is in support of the Political Parties Bill, but I haven't looked at clauses that relate to banning presidential candidates who have lost numerous election attempts. The overriding principle in that Political Parties Bill is to entrench intra-party democracy and on that one, the President is even upfront and public. He says political parties that do not exhibit democratic tendencies within, cannot be expected to form democratic governments themselves," said Chanda.

"So the PF is rallying behind the NGOs that are pushing for that, and the Minister of Justice has the support of Cabinet to present that Political Parties Bill. Further to that, Professor Ibrahim Ghambari briefed the President. He thinks that intra-party democracy is an essential element of capacity building within political parties and he will be putting it on the table for the envisaged dialogue between the opposition and the ruling party. So we support the Political Parties Bill generally."

No leave for police officers during festive season - IG

By Mukosha Funga

Inspector General of Police Kakoma Kanganja has cancelled all forms of leave for his officers in order to conduct successful crime prevention activities during the festive period.

In a statement today, Kanganja announced that all provincial commanders had deployed enough officers to conduct patrols in crime prone areas.

"To ensure that people celebrate their festivities in a more favorable and crime free environment, the Zambia Police have put in place stringent and adequate security measures throughout the country. All Provincial Commanders have adequately planned for this festive period in their respective Provinces and have deployed enough Police Officers to conduct both foot and motorised patrols in all crime prone areas. I have forthwith cancelled all forms of leave so as to increase on the levels of manpower to enable our institution achieve our objective of carrying out successful crime

prevention activities," Kanganja stated. He advised motorists to observe road traffic rules.

"We have also embarked on joint operations with all our stakeholders in enforcement of road traffic rules and regulations so as to ensure utmost safety on our roads. I urge all motorists to observe road traffic rules and regulations in order to avoid preventable accidents and loss of life. We will continue bringing sanity on our roads by conducting snap checks in strategic areas with a view of monitoring and promoting compliance with the provisions of the Road Traffic Act," he stated.

And Kanganja revealed that police had recorded a decrease in criminal cases. "As we come to the close of the year 2017, I wish to thank members of the public for their unwavering support rendered to the Zambia Police in combating crime during this ending year. Crime prevention as everyone may be aware is a collective responsibility which requires concerted effort from

all sections of society beginning from an individual level. I wish to announce that with the continued support received from the general public and dedication of our officers, the Zambia Police have yet again managed to further reduce incidences of crime this year. Statistically, from first quarter to third quarter of 2017, the country recorded a total of 44,555 criminal cases compared to last year during the same period where 44,771 criminal cases recorded last year representing a reduction by 216 cases representing 0.48 percent," he stated.

"For us to sustain this status quo, there is need for continued collaboration between the Police and the general public as it is not disputable that crime affects everyone irrespective of status in society."

He advised people to be security cautious during the festive season.

"As we approach the festive season where most of the people are in a celebratory mood, I would like to once again remind the general public on the

need to be vigilant because it is during such periods that criminals also find opportunities to attack and steal from unsuspecting members of the public. I also call upon management at shopping malls and banks to put in place enough security measures at their business centers so as to guarantee the security of their clients. Members of the public should also consider their personal security as paramount by ensuring that they secure their properties and avoid exposing valuables and personal effects that may attract the attention of criminals. Those of you making cash transactions involving huge sums of money should do so from secured areas as such transactions have potential to attract the attention of criminals. Be security conscious and mindful of suspicious looking people idling at such places and report them to the nearest Police or Bank personnel," stated Kanganja.

"On behalf of the Zambia Police Service, I wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Crime-Free 2018."

ZNBC cadres and 'bootylicking'

Our fellow journalists from the Zambia National Broadcasting Corporation are under siege from the ruling party and government officials. They are being victimized for not being loyal civil servants. Some have been threatened with dismissal from employment while others are being frustrated through politically motivated provincial transfers and departmental re-deployments.

We have a lot of respect for some of the journalists who are being targeted at ZNBC because they have been in the game for many years before the Patriotic Front was even formed. They have covered all presidents in and outside State House and they have very little left to offer the national broadcaster now; other than sharing their experiences and lessons with young upcoming cameramen and reporters. They have worked under abusive ministers, brutal regimes and dictatorial heads of state. To be threatened with dismissal today, shows that there is something awfully wrong with the current government.

We also sympathize with the young ZNBC journalists who are full of energy because, as we interact with them in the field, they share horrific stories about the environment under which they operate. When their editors send them to cover an opposition figure, they usually say, "we are recording for the archives"

because they know that such news never makes it on ZNBC bulletins.

But they are not dull, incompetent or less qualified. In their heads, ZNBC reporters are just as professional as any other sober journalist you may think of. Some are actually more exposed than the rest of us; the only difference is that they are not allowed to practice their professionalism. Their work environment doesn't give them room to practice the skills they learnt in college. If they have to investigate anything, they are free to research on bilharzia in adults or causes of elephantiasis, but they should never touch on topics such as corruption or abuse of office among government officials; otherwise the next thing they will be investigating is how they were fired.

The Patriotic Front, just like other political parties that have ruled Zambia in the past, have taken advantage of these ZNBC journalists. They have trained them that news is what the President and his ministers say. Sometimes when you arrive at a ministerial assignment before the ZNBC camera crew, the minister makes everyone else wait because "the media has not yet arrived". Some ministers have gone to the extent of personalizing these journalists; every local and international trip they make carries one specific reporter or cameraperson.

News Diggers!

Ear to the ground

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Today government officials are complaining that some ZNBC reporters are working with the opposition. Their own PF-trained journalists are being labeled as traitors. They are being linked to newly formed National Democratic Congress - a breakaway party from the PF. In fact, they are being called NDC cadres!

But the PF must not complain because they created these cadres out of journalists. They must not complain when these cadres switch their loyalties because cadres by nature like to go where it's funky. Right now, there is *chimwela* in NDC and some few coins here and there. Cadres, just like mercenaries, are good at reading the political mood in the country and their inclinations can tell you a lot about who is making the right noise on the political battlefield. If it is true that our fellow journalists at ZNBC have started flirting with Kambwili's party, it means they see a revolution through it and they want to

position themselves ahead of time in order to get jobs.

The PF must not forget that Chishimba Kambwili was a Cabinet minister, member of the Central Committee and member of parliament. He had power and influence in all the ministries where he served including Information and Broadcasting. He employed some of the journalists who work at Mass Media, so they are willing to share certain information with him.

What has happened to PF is that the ZNBC journalist-cadres are giving them a taste of their own medicine. When these reporters were flirting with PF, the ruling party had no quarrel with them; not a single one of them was fired, suspended or transferred. On many occasions, the opposition complained about the lack of professionalism among some reporters, especially during the last election campaigns, but the PF responded by rewarding these journalists with diplomatic positions. Now, the 'ZNBC cadres' that were

left out on those diplomatic postings are not happy, they are also looking for greener pastures; so don't punish them for applying their political survival skills. This is what happens when you create rules and laws that suit your current circumstance in order to stifle political adversaries.

While we are still talking about disloyalty and betrayal, we would like to warn government officials who are clapping for Bowman Lusambo over his statement that he is number one bootlicker for President Edgar Lungu. The Copperbelt Province Minister says if the President asks him to dance he will dance, jump he will jump. In other words, he is telling citizens that he will execute any instruction given to him by President Lungu without any question. It means if the President woke up angry one morning and ordered the minister to kill Kambwili, Mr Bowman will not hesitate to hire assassins; he will not refuse or ask the President "why?"

We are sure that everybody in the PF government, including President Lungu himself appreciates that the statement from Mr Bowman was uncivilised and wrong, but no one will raise a finger against him because the Copperbelt Province Minister is wagging his 'tail' for the ruling party. What PF doesn't see is that when they eventually get out of power and Mr Bowman manages to vampire his way back into government, he will be willing to execute the same orders against those who will be outside.

We would like to further remind President Lungu that before Mr Bowman started 'bootylicking' him, he was 'bootylicking' Mr Rupiah Banda and later Mr Nevers Mumba. And during that time, when he was ordered to beat someone, he did not hesitate; Major Richard Kachingwe can attest to this. Therefore, President Lungu must not think his booty is the last one that Mr Bowman will be licking.

The West owes Zimbabwe a future

For Zimbabwe, this is a great time. Robert Mugabe's 37-year long rule has ended without adding to the blood and suffering that he has already caused to his country's people. This moment is as much a victory for the people as it is for the army which moved against him.

The next few weeks will be crucial. But if Zimbabwe is to have a positive future, it's time for Western countries to own up to the role they played in the country's catastrophe, and to put it right.

Six years ago, Jubilee Debt Campaign investigated the history of Zimbabwe's debt. That debt - now thought to be running close to \$10-billion - is unpayable by a country that remains in economic collapse. But it is also testament to the role that Western governments, international institutions and transnational corporations have played in Zimbabwe's catastrophe.

Zimbabwe's debt has its origins in loans which were used to bolster the military power of the white

supremacist government of Rhodesia (Southern Rhodesia being the colonial name for Zimbabwe) in violation of UN sanctions. These debts (worth \$700-million at that time) were handed down to Mugabe after 1980, who inherited a country with "middle income" economic status but also high levels of poverty and inequality.

The new Zimbabwe ran up further debts simply trying to prevent destabilisation from apartheid South Africa, which was still being supported by governments like Britain well into the 1980s. As early as 1998, my organisation called for the cancellation of these "apartheid debts". But in effect, they are still being recycled, with no acknowledgement of the damage wrought by that terrible period in Southern Africa's history.

Who was recycling these debts? Enter the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank, who responded to successive droughts by extending loans to the country, on the condition

that Zimbabwe implemented "structural adjustment" reforms. In modern terms, this meant austerity: cut government spending, liberalise trade, freeze wages, remove financial controls.

It seems strange now, but Mugabe was a model student of austerity for a while, praised by the World Bank for the "persistence and determination" with which these reforms were pursued. Too right. During the early 1990s drought, the most serious since the 1960s, maize was still being exported overseas, as a condition of the structural adjustment programme.

The long-term tensions these policies caused could hardly have been contained even by a well-meaning government, never mind the ruthless regime of Mugabe. The results affected every part of society. Badly needed land redistribution was scaled down, and the country became dependent on food imports. The successful textile industry collapsed. Unemployment rocketed to

around 50%. Public spending cuts and the introduction of healthcare fees saw maternal mortality double. Inflation shot up.

Even the IMF and World Bank have since admitted that these reforms didn't work, with the Bank saying it "under-estimated government concerns about the impacts of reforms on the distribution of income and assets and on the racial divide inherited at independence."

Zimbabwe was also given a series of loans by European governments - often counted as "aid" - which benefitted big business, with the bill effectively being picked up by Zimbabwe's poor. For years, British "aid" was conditional on buying British-made goods. Between 1989 and 1997, the British government financially supported the sale of Hawk fighter jets, which Mugabe used to intervene in Congo, and 1 000 police land rovers which were used to suppress dissent. Britain joined other countries in supporting the infamous Hwange coal power

station, which was great for foreign corporations, but which generated so little power that it didn't even pay the interest on the loans.

Today, Zimbabwe continues to be weighed down by this debt, and by the policies which were promoted by the West.

None of this justifies the brutality or looting of Mugabe's government. And before we get too excited by the events of recent days, let's remember that Mugabe's successor, Emmerson Mnangagwa, is another hard man, who spent decades in Mugabe's clique, and has been accused of his own brutality and corruption. Zimbabwe needs change, and that change needs to come from the country's people. It's vital that the stranglehold of Mugabe's party, ZANU-PF, is broken, perhaps by a unity government preceding elections.

Western governments can continue to play a detrimental role, or they can play a useful role. If they want to make amends for past crimes, serious debt cancellation will

be required as well as genuine aid and investment tied not to free-market reforms, but a massive democratic development plan, fully transparent and accountable.

Zimbabwe stands at a crossroads. Western countries and international institutions must apologise for their previous crimes. Rather than seeing this as an opportunity for further economic control, it's time they put Zimbabwe's people in the driving seat. - Al Jazeera



Nick Dearden is the director of UK campaigning organisation Global Justice Now. He was previously the director of Jubilee Debt Campaign.

North Korea says new missile puts all of US in striking range

North Korea says it has successfully tested a new type of intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) that can reach the whole of continental United States. State television said Pyongyang had achieved its mission of becoming a nuclear state. The Hwasong-15 missile, described as its "most powerful", was launched in darkness early on Wednesday. It landed in Japanese waters but flew higher than any other missile the North had previously tested. The test, which defied international sanctions imposed over the North's weapons programme, drew swift international condemnation, with the UN Security Council due to convene an emergency session.

South Korea responded by carrying out live-fire exercises, launching one of its own ballistic missiles.

What exactly is North Korea saying?

News of the launch was announced on state television in a special broadcast at midday, as well as in a report released by state news agency KCNA.

Pyongyang says the missile reached an altitude of 4,475km (2,780 miles) and flew 950km in 53 minutes, close to independent estimates made by South Korea's military.

The projectile, fired at a steep incline, did not fly over Japan as some have done in the past, and landed about 250km short of its northern coast, according to Japanese officials. North Korea has previously said that its projectiles can hit the US but this marks the first time it says it can do it with this new type of missile, which appears to be an upgraded version of previous models.

KCNA added that North Korean leader Kim Jong-un, who personally signed off on the launch, "declared with pride that now we have finally realised the great historic cause of completing the state

nuclear force, the cause of building a rocket power".

The report said that "as a responsible nuclear power and a peace-loving state", North Korea would "make every possible effort to serve the noble purpose of defending peace and stability of the world".

It said its weapons, meant as a defence against "the US imperialists' nuclear blackmail policy", would "not pose any threat to any country" as long as North Korean interests were not infringed upon.

"This is our solemn declaration."

Could its missile really reach the US?

An analysis by the US-based Union of Concerned Scientists concludes that the missile could have travelled more

than 13,000km on a standard trajectory, thus reaching "any part of the continental United States".

But it seems likely, the analysis adds, that the missile had a very light mock warhead, meaning it might lack the power to carry a nuclear payload, which is much heavier, over that distance.

North Korea however claims that the Hwasong-15 could reach mainland US carrying a "super-large heavy warhead".

The risky business of interpreting Pyongyang's words

Experts believe North Korea is still two to three years away from the ultimate goal of being able to deliver a nuclear warhead successfully using an ICBM.

This involves some of the

most delicate, challenging technology. It is no good putting a nuclear weapon on an ICBM if the warhead disintegrates on its re-entry into the Earth's atmosphere.

No-one really thinks North Korea has cracked this challenge yet.

And what of Pyongyang's "solemn declaration" that its missiles won't pose a threat to anyone "as long as the interests of the DPRK are not infringed upon"?

It might sound like an olive branch but it is likely to be greeted with more than a little scepticism. Its "interests", after all, include the development of the most destructive weapons known to mankind.

Most experts expect to see no let-up in Kim Jong-un's single-minded pursuit of a full

nuclear capability.

And that almost certainly means more sanctions and pressure by those countries, led by the United States, who are determined to stop him.

How is the world reacting?

Prior to North Korea's statement, US defence secretary James Mattis said the missile launch had gone "higher, frankly, than any previous shots they have taken", and said North Korea posed a worldwide threat.

US President Donald Trump was briefed while the missile was still in the air, the White House said. Afterwards he said: "We will take care of it."

In other reaction:

UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres said the launch had violated sanctions and shown "complete disregard

for the united view of the international community"

China expressed "grave concern" and urged all parties to show caution

Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe called the launch an intolerable, violent act

South Korea President Moon Jae-in accused the North of "reckless" behaviour but added that there was no choice but to keep applying sanctions

The launch is the latest in a series of weapons tests that have raised tensions to unprecedented levels, as North Korea ignores criticism and continues to develop its nuclear and missile programmes.

Pyongyang last launched a ballistic missile in September, the same month it conducted its sixth nuclear test. **BBC**

Boko Haram founder's home 'to be museum'



Mohammed Yusuf founded Boko Haram in 2002

The home of the founder of Nigeria's Islamist militant group Boko Haram is to be turned into a museum, in the

hope it will boost tourism in the area.

Borno State is also considering plans to transform the Sambisa

forest - the group's base - into a tourist centre.

But critics say the plans risk immortalising founder

Mohammed Yusuf.

About 20,000 people have been killed in Boko Haram's eight-year insurgency, with dozens still dying in deadly attacks on a regular basis.

"They should look for a place like the police college, which the group destroyed," human rights lawyer Anthony Agholahun told the BBC's Pidgin Service.

"They should not be using the house of someone who killed people."

Boko Haram's founder Mohammed Yusuf began the group in 2002, focusing on opposing Western education.

It was not for another seven years that it launched its military operations in an attempt to create an Islamic state.

The same year, Yusuf was killed in police custody.

Since then, the group, which officially is called Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati wal-Jihad, meaning "People Committed to the Propagation of the Prophet's Teachings and Jihad", has spread into neighbouring countries.

However, the Nigerian government says it is winning the war against the group, and it seems officials in Borno state, one of the worst affected areas, are looking to the future.

Mohammed Bulama, Borno state commissioner for home affairs, information and culture, told reporters the house in Maiduguri would become a museum "where all the things that had happened relating to the insurgency will be archived".

"We want to document and archive all that had happened so that our future generation will be able to have first hand information," he said, according to the News Agency of Nigeria.

He added they hoped to restore the Sambisa forest, where the Chibok girls were kept after being kidnapped in 2014, back into a game reserve.

"What we intend to do when stability is fully achieved is to convert the forest into a tourist centre in order to show the world what has happened," he said. **BBC**

Saudi prince freed after corruption raid

Saudi Prince Miteb bin Abdullah has been released more than three weeks after he was detained on allegations of corruption, officials say.

Prince Miteb, once seen as a contender to the throne, was freed after agreeing an "acceptable settlement" with authorities of more than \$1bn (£750m).

He is one of more than 200 political and business figures detained in anti-corruption raids on 4 November.

Three other people have also reached settlements with the Saudi government. "Yes, Prince Miteb was released this morning [Tuesday]," a source close to the government told the *Agence*

France-Presse news agency.

Prince Miteb, who is the cousin of Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman and headed Saudi Arabia's elite National Guard, was the most politically influential royal detained in the corruption crackdown.

The 64-year-old son of the late King Abdullah was sacked shortly before his detention.

Princes, ministers and top businessmen were arrested at the beginning of the month and detained in a luxury hotel, accused of corruption.

Authorities grounded their private aircraft and their assets were seized.

Corruption is rampant in Saudi Arabia with bribes, sweeteners and lavish kickbacks having long been an integral part of doing business in the world's richest oil-producing nation.

The crown prince - backed by his father, the 81-year-old King Salman - has made no secret of his belief that the country needs reform and has focused his attention on some of the richest men in Arabia.

Many ordinary Saudis have welcomed the move to tackle corruption with the hope that some of their nation's wealth will be redistributed to the general population. **BBC**



Britain's Prince Harry and his fiancée US actress Meghan Markle pose for photographs in the Sunken Garden at Kensington Palace in London following the announcement of their engagement

Arrests don't do enough to transform sexual offenders – Chief Chamuka

By Joseph Mwenya

Chief Chamuka of the Lenje speaking people of Chisamba district in Central province says the best way to fight Gender Based Violence (SGBV) cases in the country is through spiritual counselling because perpetrators behave in a manner that is beyond human understanding.

And Religious Affairs and National Guidance Minister, Reverend Godfridah Sumaili says promoting the establishment of chaplaincy in the chiefdom is in line with her ministry's mandate of actualising the declaration of Zambia as a Christian nation. Speaking at his palace during the induction ceremony of Apostle Benasho Kabwe, of Power Harvest Full Gospel Ministries, as chaplain, Chief Chamuka lamented that the cases recorded on sexual violence and defilement were so alarming.

He said the increase in GBV cases in the chiefdom required a different approach because arresting perpetrators only has not helped to transform the minds of offenders.

Referring to some cases of defilement, Chief Chamuka said some people in the nation were behaving in a manner that defied human understanding.

"We have a lot of issues mostly to do with gender based violence. Chiefs alone cannot manage to fight this vice. I feel we need the presence of a man of God at the palace,



so that as a chief I can be drawing wisdom from him. The setting up of the office of the chaplaincy will help in the fight against gender based violence. The arrest of perpetrators of gender based violence is usually given priority. But I think arrests of culprits should take second priority. What we need to do is to cherish spiritual counselling because the perpetrators of SGBV usually act in a manner that is beyond understanding," Chief Chamuka said. The chief reiterated that if spiritual counselling was given priority in the lives of offenders, everything else

would fall in their rightful place.

"We want this chiefdom and

Zambia as whole to be violent free and I feel the word of God is the best tool that can

refine everything," he said.

And Minister of Religious Affairs and National

Guidance, Reverend Godfridah Sumaili said the promoting the establishment of chaplaincy in the chiefdom was in line with her ministry's mandate of actualising the declaration of Zambia as a Christian nation.

She challenged other traditional leaders to emulate Chief Chamuka in speaking against the evils of early marriages and other GBV related cases.

"What is happening here must be a model to other chiefdoms. It is my hope that all traditional leaders in the nation will come on board with the establishment of the chaplaincy. I am confident that this initiative will contribute greatly to the inculcation of national values as enshrined in our constitution. I am talking about morality and ethics, patriotism, national unity, social justice, among others," said Reverend Sumaili.

Tomb of Jesus Christ dated for first time

The ancient cave that Christians believe held the remains of Jesus Christ dates from 1,700 years ago, according to scientists—far earlier than they originally believed.

The scientific dating tests on the shrine, which began in October 2016, were the first of their kind carried out on what the faithful believe to be the resting place of the Christian Messiah. The tomb itself had not been opened in centuries and had previously been thought to have first been built during the time of the Crusaders, and so no older than 1,000 years.

However, experts can now say with certainty the tomb complex was originally constructed in A.D. 345, in the time of the Byzantine Emperor Constantine, 17 centuries ago, National Geographic reported.

Jerusalem's Church of the Holy Sepulchre, where the limestone cave is located, had been partially destroyed and rebuilt throughout the centuries as a result of violent attacks, earthquakes and fires over the course of the city's turbulent history. The church was completely destroyed in A.D. 1009 and rebuilt, which had

led to conventional academic thinking that it was unlikely the church could be identified as the same site consecrated by a Roman delegation in the third century. But results of the modern-day scientific tests have put the date of the building of the cave far closer to the Roman consecration of the site in A.D. 325. A Roman temple was built at the site two centuries earlier, but according to historical record, this was later razed with excavations beneath showing the cave of the burial of Christ, now known as the Edicule. **Yahoo**

CAF nominates Patson for 2017 Young Player of the Year award

By Nyambe Lubasi
Striker Patson Daka has made the shortlist for the 2017 c. But Zesco United defender Fackson Kapumbu has failed to make penultimate ten-man shortlist for both the 2017 African and African-based player awards after earlier making the preliminary list. The Zambia striker's nomination comes after inspiring Young Chipolopolo to the 2017 U20 AFCON triumph as hosts and later debut quarterfinal appearance at the 2017 FIFA U20 World Cup. Daka later shined in the 2018 FIFA World Cup qualifiers scoring two goals in Zambia's last three Group B matches. He is up against 2017 U20 AFCON runners-up Senegal striker Krepin Diatta who scored two goals at the tournament Zambia won as hosts in March. South Africa U20 striker Luther Singh also makes

the shortlist alongside 2017 CAF U17 runners-up Ghana striker and that tournaments top scorer Eric Aiyah who scored four goals. CAF U17 champions Mali midfielder Salam Giddou

has also made the five-man shortlist. Meanwhile, Zambia Under-20 is also up for the 2017 CAF Team of the Year Award where it is up against big guns, 2018 FIFA World

Cup finalists and 2017 AFCON runners-up Egypt. 2017 AFCON champions Cameroon, CAF U17 champions Mali and 2018 FIFA World Cup finalists Nigeria complete that

shortlist. 2018 FIFA World Cup referee Jan Sikazwe has been nominated for the 2017 Referees award where he is up against Bamlak Tessema of Ethiopia, Egyptian Ghead

Grisha, Malang Diedhiou of Senegal, Algerian Mehdi Abid Charef and Papa Bakary Gassama of Gambia. Sikazwe, Gassama, Tessema and Charef will be at the 2018 FIFA World Cup in Russia.

LeBron James ejected for first time in 1,082-game NBA career



LeBron James was ejected for the first time in his illustrious career on Tuesday night, tossed in the third quarter of Cleveland's 108-97 win over the Miami Heat after becoming incensed at not getting a foul called on a drive to the basket. Kevin Love scored 32 of his 38 points in the first half and James added 21 as the Cavaliers extended their winning streak to nine. With the Cavs leading by 23, James, who had attempted just one free throw at that point, drove the length of the floor and drew contact from Miami's James Johnson and Dion Waiters. When he didn't hear

a whistle, James screamed and gestured toward referee Kane Fitzgerald, who quickly called a technical and pointed for the three-time champion to leave the floor. It was the first time James had been thrown out in 1,082 career NBA games, and he said it was a first since he started playing basketball as a boy in Akron. "On that particular play I got fouled all the way up the court, from the time that I stripped him [Johnson] all the way until I got to the rim, and so that's what it's about," James said. "I said what I had to say and I moved on, but he [Fitzgerald] thought that I should get two of them, so it is ... we got the win and that's most important." James has long complained about not getting calls near the basket, and hinted that his eruption may have been caused by pent-up frustration. "I'm one of the league leaders in points in the paint," he said. "I drive just as much as anybody. At this point, it's almost like they're trying to turn me into a jump shooter. I can't be a jump shooter. I'm not a jump shooter. I watch games every single night and I see jump shooters going to the line multiple, double-digit times every night. "I'm not a jump shooter and I get fouled just as much as everybody else, so it's going to the line one time, three times or four times, that's not what it's about." Fitzgerald said he couldn't let James' actions go unpunished. "It was a culmination of a couple different acts," he told a pool reporter. "Immediately after the no-call, he turned and threw an air punch directly at me and then he aggressively charged at me and then he used vulgarity in my ear a few times." Love had his way with every defender Miami put on him, finishing 10 of 16 from the field and 14 of 17 on free throws. He scored 22 in the first quarter and the Cavs opened a 27-point lead before halftime. Dwyane Wade added 17 points for Cleveland, who have shaken off a slow start and are again playing like the team to beat in the Eastern Conference. Wade said he has seen James angry before. "I just ain't never seen him get ejected," Wade said. "But I've definitely seen him that mad before. He only got one ejection 15 years, that's pretty good." Waiters scored 21 and Bam Adebayo had 19 for the Heat, who had won three in a row. Goran Dragic finished with just seven points 12 below his team-leading scoring average. **Yahoo**

Conor McGregor might never fight again



It's been more than three months since Conor McGregor last fought, and almost 13 months since he last set foot inside the Octagon. UFC president Dana White admitted Tuesday in a small gathering with reporters that he's not sure when – or, significantly, if – the lightweight champion will fight again. White said he knew nothing about reports in Ireland that McGregor was involved in a brawl in a pub in Dublin on Sunday. One of the men McGregor is alleged to have punched is a man with ties to the leader of a drug cartel in Ireland. McGregor couldn't be reached for comment and his manager, Audie Attar, failed to respond to messages. White said he hasn't spoken with McGregor, but was betting the reports are erroneous. "No, [I don't know anything about it], but I don't think it's true," White said. "Conor can walk down the street and it's big news now. If this is true, I just have to believe it would be off-the-charts crazy." White said he was trying to put together a fight

involving McGregor for UFC 219, which will be held at T-Mobile Arena on Dec. 30. Because of his actions earlier this month at a Bellator event – in which McGregor jumped into the cage during a fight, shoved the referee and slapped a Bellator employee – White said McGregor now won't fight on that show as punishment. Attar had previously denied McGregor was going to fight on the Dec. 30 show, saying his attention had always been focused on returning to the cage in the first quarter of 2018. White admitted that he's not so sure whether McGregor, who reportedly earned in excess of \$100 million to fight Floyd Mayweather in a boxing match on Aug. 26, will ever compete again. "Listen, Conor might never fight again," White said as he was discussing the McGregor-Bellator incident. "He made \$100 [expletive] million. I've got guys who made less than that who are lawyers and went to school their whole lives and quit working. When you go to school your whole life to be a lawyer, and you're

a good lawyer, and you make a few bucks and you're done? The guy's sitting home every day watching cartoons or whatever he's doing. I don't know. "[Ex-UFC matchmaker] Joe Silva doesn't work any more. These guys make money and that's it. Fighting is the worst. Fighting is the worst. Try to get up and get punched in the face every day when you have \$100 million in the bank. Money changes everything with a lot of people." White stressed that he likes McGregor and said the UFC is negotiating a new contract with him. McGregor has frequently said he wants equity in the company in his next contract, so White was asked about that. While he said McGregor deserves to be richly paid, he stopped short of saying he deserved to be given a share of the company. He invoked NBA legend Michael Jordan's name in his simple response. "Did Jordan get points?" White asked, chuckling. He said, though, that "Conor can't be paid enough money. He's worth every penny and more." **Yahoo**

PRESSURE IS ON ZESCO - ZANACO

By Nyambe Lubasi
Zanaco insist the pressure is on leaders Zesco United heading into the finish line for the 2017

FAZ Super Division title. The defending champions are breathing down Zesco's neck on 70 and 71 points

respectively heading into this Saturday's title-deciding round. Green Buffaloes too are in that

tight race in 3rd place and tied on points with Zanaco but with an inferior goal difference. Zanaco and Buffaloes closed-

in on the leaders on Sunday after similar 2-1 away wins over Buildcon and Red Arrows respectively.

Zesco on the other hand failed to maintain their distance with the duo after a 0-0 away draw at Green Eagles.

"Of course it is Zesco who are under pressure because they are the ones on top," Zanaco assistant coach Dabid Chilufya said.

"They were five points ahead and now it has been cut to one point so they under pressure." Zesco must beat Mighty Mufulira Wanderers at home in Ndola this Saturday to ensure they have the last say in this matter.

Mighty, though, most also win knowing that a defeat will see them demoted.

They will also be the second successive relegation threatened team Zesco will play after Eagles.

"Besides mighty have to make sure they win this game to survive. That is why Zesco drew with Eagles because Eagles needed to survive," Chilufya said.

Zanaco host 11th placed Forest Rangers who have survived while Buffaloes await Eagles, the side that held Zesco over the weekend.

In their respective first leg matches, Zesco beat Mighty 2-1; Buffaloes defeated Eagles 2-0 while Zanaco were 1-0 winners over Forest.

"We have forest and it is more comfortable for us to win," Chilufya said.



Leicester City's Demarai Gray (L) vies with Tottenham Hotspur's Dele Alli during a Premier League match in Leicester, central England - AFP

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