



## **STATEMENT BY ZIMBABWEANS UNITED FOR DEMOCRACY (ZUNDE) ON THE LATEST DEVELOPMENTS IN ZIMBABWE**

**24 November 2018**

ZUNDE welcomes the fall of former president Robert Gabriel Mugabe, a dictator and tyrant who presided over the collapse of a once promising nation and envy of the international community. We give credit to and salute the people of Zimbabwe who have been fighting against Mugabe for the last two decades when even the military and war veterans were fiercely and solidly behind him. To the military and war veterans we say thank you for finally standing by the people. It must now be clear to you that today's real heroes are the people of our great nation who, for so many years, consistently called for Mugabe to go.

It is for this reason that ZANU PF must never think the struggle against the oppressor was their war. They must abandon forever their sense of entitlement to rule our country. They must remember always that Zimbabwe belongs to its people of all races. Unless this is acknowledged, respected and protected, our progress to recovery and prosperity will remain in peril.

We congratulate the incoming President E.D. Mnangagwa and wish him well as he picks up the pieces of a broken nation. The responsibility for healing and rebuilding has now been placed on his shoulders. The real journey has just begun. We call upon him to embrace his role as national leader of all people and not only for his party. His party is not the State. ZANU PF business, propaganda and slogans must be reserved for and confined to ZANU PF HQ and rallies. Divisive and inflammatory slogans which had become the unrelenting mantra of government must be condemned and banished. No more must the President of Zimbabwe utter slogans such as "pasi naye – down with him" when addressing the nation. He must inspire the process of healing our nation and relieving the suffering of the people. We want to hear slogans about policy and development, healing and reconciliation. We are a nation that needs to be loved and people not to be condemned for any reason.

The impeachment charges faced by former President Mugabe included not acting on corruption and failing to implement the Constitution, as well as running a dysfunctional government and party. Those charges stand as a salutary lesson to the new leader about what is required of him in discharging his mandate.

Most importantly, we call upon the President to focus on the following as a matter of priority:

1. Establish good governance and the rule of law. This will require transforming the corrupted civil service and judiciary that are effectively agencies of ZANU PF. We call upon the President to streamline the ministry, especially by removing those ministers who have become the public face of corruption, hatred and incompetence. There are many competent young and educated Zimbabweans who can do better than the dead wood we have grown so weary of.

2. Implement sound policies that will attract investment, revive the economy, and promote creation of jobs for our youths. Our commercial farmers of all races who want to return must be allocated land to farm in order to restore the agriculture sector, guarantee food security, and provide employment in rural areas. All farm seizures must stop immediately as must haphazard land redistribution carried out solely for political expediency. Zimbabwe should again become the breadbasket of southern Africa and never have to import food except in situations such as severe drought.
3. Initiate and implement a process of genuine healing and reconciliation to revive the spirit of the nation and return the country to normalcy.
4. End the culture of entitlement and impunity. Those guilty of heinous crimes including violence and corruption must answer for them. All monies stolen from the people must be accounted for and recovered.
5. Combat and eliminate endemic corruption. ZUNDE deplores the way that corruption has been institutionalised in Zimbabwe. The new President must move decisively to root out corruption from his first day in office. Zimbabweans all over the world are willing and able to help establish good governance in Zimbabwe.
6. Release all political detainees and grant a general amnesty to those facing politically motivated charges, including a blanket amnesty and pardon to all those exiled by the dictatorship for whatever reason to allow them to make a fresh start.
7. Implement processes to guarantee a free and fair election. At this early stage because of the people's mistrust of the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission and its political overseers, conducting elections should be entrusted to agencies of the United Nations, the African Union and other credible bodies. International observers should be welcomed.
8. Implement electoral reforms including access to the media by all political parties participating in national elections. Also, to ensure the credibility of elections, the current Zimbabwe Electoral Commission must be reconstituted as a truly independent statutory body with new officers and chair, that are impartial and professional. The current Registrar General Tobaiwa Mudede is long overdue for retirement. He must go home.
9. Depoliticise State institutions particularly the civil service, the ZRP and the military.
10. Fully implement the Constitution and realign legislation to the Constitution.

There is much to be done to forge a free, democratic and prosperous Zimbabwe. The people are clear in their demands for change. They will accept nothing less than decisive and effective action from their new President.

**This statement has been endorsed by Justice Benjamin Paradza, President of ZUNDE and exiled Judge of the High Court of Zimbabwe**

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