

Thoughts on Mandela's Legacy

Written by Administrator

Sunday, 08 December 2013 19:35 -

Some Robert Mugabe supporters, fearful of the devil and iconic statesman contrast between their man and Nelson Madiba Mandela, have dwelt at length on the plight of millions of South Africans still living in abject poverty. "Mandela failed to bring economic prosperity to black South Africans," they have been saying.

To hear them speak, you would think Mugabe did bring economic prosperity to Zimbabweans! The South African economy has enjoyed a steady growth of 4% plus throughout the nineteen years since black majority rule - a first amongst all post-independent Africa. There is a very good reason to believe SA will continue to enjoy peace and economic prosperity – they have a stable and democratic political system. And that is Mandela's legacy.

The Zimbabwe economy has completely collapsed during the 33 years of Mugabe's rule characterized by mismanagement, corruption, looting and, worst of all, brutal political repression. The Zimbabwe economy shrunk by a staggering 84% in the six-year period 2002 to 2008 alone - world record! Mugabe has butchered over 30 000 innocent Zimbabweans to establish and sustain the de facto Zanu PF dictatorship.

Some South Africans may not be pleased with the election results but I have never heard of one South African complaining of vote rigging. Every South African has, as Madiba promised in his "rainbow nation" inaugural speech, enjoyed their freedom and basic rights including the right to a meaningful say in the governance of the country and the right to life itself guaranteed.

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In his book "Voting for Democracy" Jonathan Moyo said Zimbabwe's 1980 elections were about "voting to end the war". He was stating the obvious; Zimbabweans were fearful that, if Mugabe did not win, the civil war would continue and voted accordingly. Once in power Mugabe moved swiftly to undermine and destroy the country's democratic institutions, building in their place the ruthless dictatorship. The country has yet to hold free and fair elections. As the years went by and the economy sunk deeper and deeper, dragging millions into poverty and despair, his notoriety as a ruthless tyrant grew; Mugabe has resorted to more and more ruthless measures to stay in power.

In 2008 Mugabe resorted to wanton violence turning the whole country into a war-zone to stay in power.

This year, aware that the whole world was watching him, he used more subtle means: he looted all the windfall from the Marange diamonds and a lot more besides to finance the most expensive vote rigging operation in human history.

He paid Nikuv \$13m to corrupt the voters roll; \$10m each to two PR companies, one in the UK the other in the USA, to spruce up his image; spent hundreds of millions of dollars in buying cars and other bribes to his own Zanu PF MPs and other public officials like the Police and ZEC members; spent hundreds of millions of dollars more bussing paid supporters to attend Zanu PF rallies and then bussed them from one polling station to the next to vote etc. All in all Mugabe must have squandered at least \$3 billion.

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To some rich country \$3 billion is small change; not so for Zimbabwe. A few weeks ago the Ministry of Higher Education told a parliamentary committee that they received a miserly \$50 000 out of its budget of \$380 m in 2013. It is not education alone that has been starved of funds. Prisoners with no relatives to bring them food have been left starving; hundred have starved to death, according to some reports.

The only thing Mugabe and Mandela had in common was that they both were imprisoned by the white regime at one point. Mugabe has never allowed the nation and the whole world to forget his fight for Zimbabwe's independence. To hear him talk of "heroic self-sacrifice for freedom" (by himself and hundreds of his Zanu PF friends now buried at Hero's Acre) you would be forgiven for thinking Mugabe must be the reincarnated King Leonidas who led his legendary 300 in the Battle of Thermopylae.

If anything Mugabe is in fact the incarnation of pompous tyrant Xerxes! And his cronies have desecrated Hero's Acre turning it into Looter and Murderers' Acre!

Mandela's wish was for a South Africa, "a rainbow nation at peace with itself." His wish has been granted in his life time and for generations to come. That is Madiba's legacy and he can rest in peace, for a job well done.

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After 33 years of unmitigated failure and brutal repression Mugabe is still hungry for power; hungry enough to risk the very existence of the whole nation in a vote rigging operation. There is not enough water in the Kariba Dam to wash away the innocent blood of Zimbabweans Mugabe has shed to gratify his greed and ego.

Zimbabwe is teetering on the edge of the abyss; it could easily slide into another Egypt or Syria. The three decades of brutal dictatorship have created an unquenchable desire for more loot on the part of Mugabe and his Zanu PF cronies on the one hand and deep rooted mistrust of those in authority on the part of the long suffering masses. This is not a nation at peace with itself but at war!

Chaos and bloodshed that is Mugabe's legacy!

Wilbert Mukori