

# NAI NEWSLETTER

1 February 2005

## WITH FOCUS ON MALAWI AND ZIMBABWE

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### WHAT IS BEHIND THE FIGHT AGAINST CORRUPTION IN MALAWI?

In May last year Bingu wa Mutharika was elected president of Malawi. During his election campaign he pledged, like many other African presidential candidates, to deal with widespread corruption. To the surprise of most observers, Mutharika has honoured his pledges and has not hesitated to go after high-ranking members in his own party, "the old guard".

After 30 years of rigid authoritarian rule under Hastings Banda, Malawi entered a new political era in 1994. Bakili Muluzi was elected president that year in the country's first multiparty elections. The repression from the Banda days was gone but ordinary people did not receive much of democratic dividends. Governance continued to be authoritarian and the political class enriched itself even more.

Muluzi stepped down in 2004 after parliament refused to accept an amendment to the constitution allowing him to stand for a third term. He picked Bingu wa Mutharika as his party's (United Democratic Front/UDF) presidential candidate. Perceived as a relative outsider, the nomination surprised many UDF members and led to several party heavyweight defections. Mutharika was elected in "free but not fair" elections according to international observers.

Since being sworn in, Mutharika's relationship with Muluzi seems to have soured. An anti-corruption campaign he launched has seen the arrest of senior UDF members and made him unpopular among sections of the party loyal to Muluzi.

Muluzi probably believed that if he could have someone installed as president, without a lot of power in ruling party structures, he would be able to control and rule from behind the scenes. But Mutharika seems to have decided he wants to be his own person. His zero-tolerance campaign against corruption has alarmed some UDF party stalwarts, who have already started accusing the new president of political witch hunting.

Under the previous government corrupt activities of officials were almost tolerated, but the tide seems to be turning. "It's no secret that the former president has the backing of UDF heavyweights, but I don't think that Mutharika has deliberately gone after Muluzi's allies. Mutharika's anti-corruption drive is more about showing donors that he can run a clean

government, and less about political witch hunting” says Boniface Dulani, political science lecturer at the University of Malawi.

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USEFUL WEBSITES:

Malawi on AllAfrica  
<http://allafrica.com/malawi/>

Malawi on IRIN:

[http://www.irinnews.org/frontpage.asp?SelectRegion=Southern\\_Africa&SelectCountry=Malawi](http://www.irinnews.org/frontpage.asp?SelectRegion=Southern_Africa&SelectCountry=Malawi)

The Nation, Malawi’s biggest daily:

<http://www.nationmalawi.com/>

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USEFUL NAI PUBLICATIONS:

Harri Englund (ed.) (2002), *A Democracy of Chameleons. Politics and Culture in the New Malawi*. Uppsala, NAI.

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USEFUL PUBLICATIONS IN THE NAI LIBRARY:

Kenneth R. Ross (2004), “Worrisome Trends”: The Voice of the Churches in Malawi’s Third Term Debate. *African Affairs* 103: 91-107.

Harri Englund (2001), *Winning Elections, Losing Legitimacy: Multipartyism and the Neopatrimonial State in Malawi*. In M. Cowen and L. Laakso (eds.) *Multiparty Elections in Africa*. Oxford: James Currey.

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## THE 2005 ZIMBABWE PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS

**In March 2005, on a date yet to be announced, Zimbabwe will hold its sixth parliamentary elections. This time, even the “friendly” party, South Africa’s ruling African National Congress (ANC), has openly voiced its doubts on the possibility for free and fair elections.**

The elections are important in several ways. The ruling party, ZANU-PF, has labelled them the “Anti-Blair” elections and repeatedly point out that what is

at stake is Zimbabwe's very existence as an independent and sovereign nation.

In reality ZANU-PF is trying to avoid the mistakes of the 2000 elections when it was almost defeated. ZANU-PF wants to bury the MDC and it makes no secret of its intentions. Having failed to change the constitution because it does not have the requisite two-thirds majority, ZANU-PF is eager to dispense with this inconvenience by securing, at any cost, an overwhelming majority.

In the run-up to the elections, several important developments have taken place in Zimbabwe. Draconian legislation on information has almost crippled the opposition by denying it access to the media, the right to campaign, and barring civil society from involvement in the crucial elections. The MDC also maintains that the existence of 50 000 youth militia, trained to coerce and intimidate opposition members, will also hinder free elections.

South Africa's ruling African National Congress (ANC), has through its Secretary General openly voiced its doubts on the possibility for free and fair elections. His statement specifically mentioned the Public Order and Security Act (POSA), which he condemned for preventing the MDC from holding meetings in the lead-up to elections.

The ZANU-PF government argues that it has complied with the SADC Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections, granting all opposition parties the right to campaign freely. However, critics have pointed out that changes are only cosmetic. A SADC delegation of lawyers is presently assessing the conditions.

By law, the defence forces, whose Commander-in-Chief is the President of Zimbabwe, will play a crucial role in the administration of the elections. In addition, the voters' role is allegedly in shambles. Whereas it is quite easy for the rural electorate to register as voters and to vote, a whole lot of bureaucratic impediments, reminiscent of the 2002 presidential elections, have been put in place for the urban electorate. The number of constituencies in urban areas has also been reduced, while those in rural areas have increased. This makes sense if it is remembered that the rural areas make up the ruling party's power base, while the opposition derives its support from the urban areas.

The government has made it clear that no observers from hostile countries (read the West) will be invited to observe the elections. Invitations will be restricted to friendly countries and organisations. No one can legally observe or monitor elections in Zimbabwe unless they are properly accredited. Breaking the law in this respect entails jail and/or deportation.

In the run-up to the elections, Zimbabwe has witnessed a lot of infighting in both major parties. Because of the intra-party struggles, inter-party violence is yet to be witnessed. The major threats to the opposition appear to be some state organs, especially the police, who in an effort to enforce POSA, which requires police permission for any gathering of more than three people

discussing politics, have been accused of selectively applying the law by targeting the opposition, thereby crippling its ability to campaign freely.

At one time the MDC declared that it would not contest the elections. Participating would legitimise what the party fears will be flawed elections. However, not participating would be a present to ZANU-PF. Less than two months before the elections the MDC has still not announced its decision.

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USEFUL WEBSITES:

[www.zimonline.co.za](http://www.zimonline.co.za)

The best and constantly updated Internet resource

[www.newzimbabwe.com](http://www.newzimbabwe.com)

[www.zwnews.com](http://www.zwnews.com),

[www.daily-news.co.za](http://www.daily-news.co.za)

Political party websites:

[www.zanupfpub.co.zw](http://www.zanupfpub.co.zw)

[www.mdczimbabwe.org](http://www.mdczimbabwe.org)

Daily News is available on the Internet radio station between 20.30 and 21.30:

[www.swradioafrica.com](http://www.swradioafrica.com)

The privately owned daily: [www.dailymirror.co.zw](http://www.dailymirror.co.zw)

The state daily: [www.zimbabweherald.com](http://www.zimbabweherald.com).

EISA: The Electoral Institute of Southern Africa

<http://www.eisa.org.za/WEP/zimbabwe.htm>

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USEFUL NAI PUBLICATIONS:

Melber, Henning (Ed.), *Zimbabwe's Presidential Elections 2002. Evidence, Lessons and Implications*. 2002.

The contributions to this publication offer critical and political comments from scholars mainly in or from the Southern African region, who have been closely involved with regional and Zimbabwean issues.

<http://130.238.24.99/webbshop/epubl/dp/dp014.pdf>

Melber, Henning (Ed.), *Media, Public Discourse and Political Contestation in Zimbabwe*. 2004.

A critical analysis of current developments with particular reference to the media sector in the ongoing battle for hegemonic control over the public sphere.  
<http://130.238.24.99/webbshop/epubl/cai/cai027.pdf>

Dansereau, Suzanne & Mario Zamponi, *Zimbabwe – The Political Economy of Decline*, (forthcoming March 2005).

Highlights current socio-economic aspects of Zimbabwean society and contributes to understanding of the structural legacy that any future government will have to deal with.

A substantive contribution to the analysis of the overall picture in Zimbabwe.  
<http://130.238.24.99/webbshop/epubl/dp/dp027.pdf>

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#### USEFUL PUBLICATIONS IN THE NAI LIBRARY:

*Zimbabwe: Another election chance*. Crisis Group Africa Report, Pretoria/Brussels N°86, 2004:

[http://www.icg.org/library/documents/africa/southern\\_africa/086\\_zimbabwe\\_another\\_election\\_chance\\_web.doc](http://www.icg.org/library/documents/africa/southern_africa/086_zimbabwe_another_election_chance_web.doc)

Kamete, Amin Y. "In defence of national sovereignty? Urban governance and democracy in Zimbabwe". *Journal of contemporary African studies* 21:2, 2003, 193-213.

Kamete, Amin Y. "Governing the poor in Harare, Zimbabwe: Shifting perceptions and changing responses". Research Report. Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, 122, 2002.

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#### EVENTS CALENDER

**February 28:** Referendum in Burundi on the new constitution preparing the ground for power-sharing among Hutus and Tutsis.

**March 13:** Presidential elections in the Central African Republic have been postponed again. 11 candidates will run.

**March 29:** Parliamentary elections in Somaliland, despite prolonged failure to pass an election law.

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#### STUDY AFRICA IN UPPSALA

Journalists and authors of textbooks in the Nordic countries and students at Nordic universities and colleges can apply for study grants to spend one month in Uppsala using the Institute's library resources.

**Deadline for applications: 1 April 2005.**

For further information: <http://www.nai.uu.se/stip/sstip/studyeng.html>

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NEW BOOKS FROM THE NORDIC AFRICA INSTITUTE

<http://www.nai.uu.se/publ/publeng.html>

Poluha, Eva (2004), *The Power of Continuity. Ethiopia through the eyes of its children.*

Bigsten Arne, Abebe Shimeles & Bereket Kebede (Eds.) (2005), *Poverty, Income Distribution and Labour Markets in Ethiopia.*

Therborn, Göran (Ed.) (2005), *African Families in a Global Context.*

Bull-Christiansen, Lene (2005), *Tales of the Nation. Feminist Nationalism or Patriotic History? Defining National History and Identity in Zimbabwe.*

**If you would like to review any of the new books please contact  
Helena Olsson [Helena.Olsson@nai.uu.se](mailto:Helena.Olsson@nai.uu.se)**

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- *Conflict and Peace in West Africa* by Cyril Obi
- *Proliferation of small arms in Ghana* by Emmanuel Sowatey
- *Northern Uganda* by Sverker Finnström
- *Inequity in world trade* by Georges Kobou

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