

## **MINISTERIAL STATEMENT ON CHALIMABANA UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA FARM AND COLUMN COAL MINE DISTURBANCES**

Mr. Speaker,

I thank you for giving me the opportunity to make this Ministerial Statement in this August House today, Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> October 2010.

Mr. Speaker, this is in compliance with your directive that I should make a Ministerial Statement on the alleged Police Brutality at the Chalimbana University of Zambia Farm, following a Point of Order raised by Hon. Jean Kapata, MP for Mandevu on Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> October 2010, and also on the shooting incident at Column Coal Mine in Sinazeze, following a Point of Order raised by Hon. Raphael Muyanda, MP for Sinazongwe on Friday 15<sup>th</sup> October 2010.

Mr. Speaker, I will in this statement cover both issues.

On the Police Brutality at the Chalimbana University of Zambia Farm, allow me Mr. Speaker to first give the August House, through you Sir, the brief background on the problem of illegal squatters in Lusaka before I address the specific issue of squatters at Chalimbana University of Zambia Farm.

Mr. Speaker, in the recent past there has been public out cry on illegal land allocation and occupation particularly by people masquerading as party cadres. The reports have been numerous and devastating to the extent that the Head of State had to direct that there should be an end to this. Consequently, a taskforce comprising members from the Ministries of Home Affairs, Lands, Justice, Local Government and Housing and the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Services was constituted to deal with the scourge. To-date reports of illegal allocation of land are being received and the police is being used to repossess and where there has been need culprits have been arrested.

Mr. Speaker, reports of illegal allocation of land is being received on a daily basis. The Police, who are part of the Task Force on Land,

move in to remove the squatters, and in some cases culprits have been arrested and taken to courts of law. Those who resist Police appeals to vacate land that does not belong to them meet the long arm of the law enforcement agencies.

Mr. Speaker, the nature of squatters is that they are violent people who do not care about who owns the land they intend to grab. They use force to grab and sell plots, disguising themselves as party cadres.

Mr. Speaker, each time the Police approach the squatters, the latter become violent and begin to throw stones at the Police. There are numerous examples of confrontations between the law enforcement agencies, the Police in this case, and the illegal land grabbers and squatters.

Mr. Speaker between August 2008 and October 2010, a number of farms in Lusaka belonging to individuals have been encroached upon by squatters. In almost all the cases, invaders come armed with sticks, axes, picks, slashes and stones with which they attack owners of the farms.

Mr. Speaker let me at this point give the August House a few of the many examples in support of what I have stated:-

1. In August, 2008 at Farm No. 1938/Lusaka West the owner of the farm was attacked by suspected cadres who were armed with stones and sticks, with intention to illegally take over the farm.
2. In March 2009 at SOS Children's Village, a group of Ng'ombe displaced residents went to the plot where Ministry of Education wanted to build a school and damaged property worth millions of Kwacha.
3. In April 2009 a large group of suspected irate party cadres armed with hoes, picks and machetes invaded farm No. 687/1/D/18 in Makeni Satwant area belonging to Mr. Manual Hamakoko. The family was attacked and Mrs. Hamakoko sustained injuries on her neck and arm.

4. In August 2009, a group of suspected cadres entered property No. 2978/M in Kabanana and using machetes, stones and other building instruments attacked the owner of the farm. Suspected cadres have built houses on the farm.
5. In September 2009, Farm No. 5664 in Lusaka West belonging to Mrs. Edna Sitwale, a widow, was encroached by a large number of people armed with sticks, picks etc. They injured the owner and grabbed part of the farm and built houses.
6. In November 2009, a group of about 100 suspected cadres attacked farm 2/37/M in Ibex Hill. They assaulted the care taker who sustained serious injuries on both legs. They also looted and demolished two farm houses.
7. On 10<sup>th</sup> December 2009 at Mwiinga's farm 144/M, Lusaka West a group of irate suspected Party Cadres descended on the Bailiffs and some Police Officers who had gone to secure a farm by a wall fence. They attacked police officers and set ablaze a grader and a vannette.
8. In July 2010 at Lusaka SOS Children's Village dispute area, about 20 makeshift structures occupied by women of N'gombe displaced people were set ablaze by suspected Party Cadres armed with iron bars, chains and machetes. They were led by Mr. Ziffa Banda who was arrested and is appearing before court.
9. In August 2010, Farm 12780 in Lusaka West belonging to Mr. Saffieadine was invaded by an angry mob, armed with iron bars, picks and axes and pulled down the wall fence thus securing the farm.
10. In the same month of august, 2010, Col. Moses Phiri in the company of Detective Inspector Mtonga of Lusaka Division went to his farm No. 7050/M. They found at the farm a group of suspected Party Cadres armed with hoes handles, axes and slashes. They attacked and assaulted Col. Phiri. He sustained serious injuries on his face whilst his motor vehicle

Toyota Corolla was badly damaged. The police officer sustained a mutilated right ear. Two suspects, namely M/James Ngosa and M/Mbangu have since been arrested and appeared before court.

11. In October 2010 a large group of irate suspected party cadres (people) armed with sticks, axes and machetes encroached a farm for National Scientific Research. Police moved to the site and invaders scampered in different direction

Mr. Speaker, regarding the alleged Police Brutality as depicted in the video clip by Muvi Television, what transpired started with squatters illegally occupying University of Zambia Farm. Efforts by UNZA management to persuade the squatters to leave the area failed. The squatters became violent, thereby forcing the management to seek police intervention. The Police went to the area and managed to push them out of the area. However, the squatters retreated in order to regroup. They reorganized themselves and came back to fight the police.

Mr. Speaker, three scenarios are depicted in the video clips. The first scenario shows police officers guarding the farm where they had earlier managed to remove the squatters. The second shows a mob of squatters organized in military fashion, getting ready to attack and force the Police out of the farm. Squatters are seen chanting slogans and running towards police officers. In the third and last scenario, police are seen overpowering the squatters using shot batons. The police Mr. Speaker, used short batons to calm the situation thereby managed to bring the situation to normal. Those arrested, Mr. Speaker have since appeared in court.

Mr. Speaker, it is clear from what I have said that the Police use minimum force in situations where squatters who illegally occupy land by force refuse to obey police orders to leave such illegally occupied land.

Mr. Speaker, the Zambia Police is among the law enforcement agencies that are entrusted by the Zambian people with the responsibility of ensuring that law and order is upheld in order that all of us, Zambians go on with our various businesses in an

environment of peace and security. In doing so, they will, where necessary apply minimum force to ensure compliance with our laws. Those who trample on other people's human rights risk losing their rights if wrongly applied. To this effect, I wish to inform this August House that from the disturbances that occurred, one hundred and thirty nine (139) persons were arrested and of these, fifty (50) persons were from the University farm fracas and the rest from other areas.

Mr. Speaker, let me conclude on this matter by appealing to all members of the public to be law abiding citizens. Similarly Mr. Speaker I appeal to all Honourable Members of Parliament to sensitize their constituents on the need to use existing laws in obtaining land. Mr. Speaker this way we will all be contributing to make Zambia a peaceful place in which to live.

Mr. Speaker, let me now address the August House on the shooting incident at Column Coal mine in Sinazeze. Mr. Speaker, there was indeed a shooting incident in Sinazeze. The incident which is regrettable happened when the Chinese Mine Management workers shot at the demonstrating Mine workers using shotgun cartridges. Mr. Speaker, as a result of the shooting, thirteen (13) miners were reported to have been injured with two (2) in serious conditions admitted to the Maamba Mine Hospital. The two have since been transferred to the University Teaching Hospital.

The background to the unfortunate incident is that the Column Mine management in Sinazeze has had differences with their workers over low salaries. There had been discussions between the management and the workers on the issue of salaries. Arising from these discussions the workers had hoped that there would be an increase in their October salaries. When the first group of workers received their salary on 15<sup>th</sup> October, they discovered that there was no increase on their salaries.

Mr. Speaker, when the first group informed their colleagues that there had been no increase to their salaries, they all agreed to confront management. When the group of workers advanced as a mob, Management felt threatened and two of them shot at the

crowd. Mr. Speaker, the two were arrested and were temporarily detained at Sinazeze Police Station and later were shifted to Choma Central Prison, pending investigations.

Mr. Speaker, after the incident had happened, we the Government through Ministries of Home Affairs, Labour and Mines on one hand, and the Chinese Government through its Embassy in Zambia, and Management of Column Coal Mine in Sinazongwe on the other hand, engaged in discussions on the issue.

Mr. Spekaer, I am glad to report to the House that the Chinese Embassy has among other measures urged the owner of the Coal Mine to consider paying better salaries to the Zambian workers. The Chinese Government through the Embassy reminds all their overseas companies to strictly comply with the laws and regulations of the host countries.

Mr. Speaker, this is as it should be with all our cooperating foreign countries. In this particular case, the Chinese side supports us, the Zambian side in our effort to carry out investigations into the incident at Column Coal Mine and bring to book all the offenders. In this respect, I wish to report that some of the rioters were also arrested.

Mr. Speaker, in conclusion, the information I have is that the situation is presently under control. The Police are keeping vigil on the Mine.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you.

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