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PRESIDENT CHAMISA STATEMENT ON TANZANIA AND ELECTIONS IN SADC

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Harare, Zimbabwe

DEMOCRACY UNDER SIEGE IN AFRICA

- 1.**President Chamisa notes with deep disdain the alarming developments, events, and violence in Tanzania, and condemns the discredited and disputed election, marred by violence and encyclopedic irregularities.
- 2.**President Chamisa expresses concern over the excessive use of force against citizens, the violence, human rights abuses, internet shutdowns, as well as the killings, fatalities, and injuries perpetrated on innocent citizens.
- 3.**President Chamisa condemns electoral irregularities and manipulation that began with the elimination, incarceration, and disqualification of genuine and credible opposition figures, and is alarmed by reports of abductions, forced disappearances, and violence against civil society.
- 4.**President Chamisa is deeply concerned about the increase of incidents of discredited, controversial, and disputed elections across the African continent, particularly, of late, in Zimbabwe, Mozambique, and Tanzania electoral processes, as a growing and disturbing phenomenon in SADC.
- 5.**These manipulations include internet shutdowns, disqualification of candidates, withholding of ballots, tampering with voter rolls, intimidation of voters, harassment of opposition parties, deprivation of media coverage, the abuse of state resources to influence electoral outcomes; use of force; state capture; capture of electoral management bodies, and the weaponisation of the state.

6. President Chamisa is concerned at the ineffectiveness of regional and continental response mechanisms or appeal structures, which are supposed to be anchored on the responsibility to protect principle and the ability to provide effective, permanent solutions in circumstances of disputed national processes and elections.

7. The African continent in general, SADC in particular, faces serious escalation in military coups, disputed elections, and the inability or unwillingness to resolve electoral disputes.

8. While acknowledging the objective and constructive SEOM report, and the notable observations and deficits highlighted by the SADC Electoral Observation Mission (SEOM), it remains imperative to further strengthen institutions, mechanisms, and laws that serve as avenues of appeal to address and enhance electoral processes, and to ensure the execution and implementation of the recommendations designed to resolve electoral issues.

9. The effectiveness of the regional body has been brought under the spotlight and found wanting. The previous chair, Zimbabwe, was led by Mr. Mnangagwa, who occupied office through a disputed election that had been condemned by SADC itself in its observer mission report. This rendered both him and SADC incapacitated to resolve the same.

10. To further complicate matters, the incumbent chair of the Madagascar coup undermines the capacity of SADC to provide effective solutions and leadership in the resolution of the matter affecting the region.

11. Equally, the African Union has been found wanting by ignoring these ongoing challenges. The AU has been an absent guardian and a missing guard rail. Instead of fulfilling its mandate with and for the African people, it has become a club for the endorsement of illegitimacy, oppression and African people's marginalisation.

CALL TO ACTION

12. In Tanzania, we urge the immediate release of the opposition leader, Tundu Lissu, and all other political prisoners, and stress the need for a political solution to address the problems affecting the citizens of Tanzania.

13. SADC needs to be revamped and reformed to capacitate it to deal with contemporary challenges emerging in the region.

14. There must be a framework and roadmap for resolving disputes in all the countries with such challenges, in particular Zimbabwe, Mozambique, and Tanzania. This will curb the recurring problems and the vicious cycle of disputed and discredited electoral processes.

15. We call upon the EAC to step forward and provide leadership to resolve the debilitating conflict affecting Tanzania. We further call upon the AU to stop, and forthwith seize, the tradition of rubber stamping, and to cease endorsing tyranny and the reversal of democracy on the continent. A New Africa in Our Lifetime. We Will Make It Possible.

God Bless Africa.

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