

Trinidad & Tobago News

Western Lies and Hypocrisy: How Zimbabwe Exposes Mainstream Media

The recent Zimbabwe elections saw an escalation of attempts by external forces to intervene in the sovereign and independent nation. Given the complex circumstances surrounding Zimbabwe, for the millions of people in the Caribbean and around the world, it has been difficult to get balanced views of what is going on; ever since the Zimbabwe government, under President Robert Mugabe, started to reclaim land that was stolen during British Colonial rule. Since the start of this land reclamation exercise to now, the events in Zimbabwe have exposed, firstly, how complicit international media are in the imperial agenda of the United States and Britain and secondly, how irresponsible and lazy the local mainstream media are. Local media seem quite content to jump on the anti-Mugabe bandwagon as they casually parrot news from international media sources such as BBC, CNN, Reuters and Associated Press.

How Do We Know What We 'Know'?

In recent times I have been reasoning with many people about what is happening in Zimbabwe, and a continual theme that emerged is just how much people rely on mainstream media for views about Zimbabwe and the wider world. Many persons admitted that BBC and/or CNN were the main sources that 'informed' their perspective on Zimbabwe. However, the Western Media, especially BBC and CNN, are openly on a mission to demonize President Robert Mugabe and bring about regime change in Zimbabwe. So it is like asking a person's sworn enemy for opinions/news about that person. Very unbalanced stories will be told. It is clear that the Western international media is complicit in fabricating/distorting stories to justify intervention in the affairs of sovereign nations. And that is one of the main points that is connected to understanding the Zimbabwe issue. Local media around the world, especially where I am from in the Caribbean, simply reproduce coverage by the dominant international media. Even when local commentators try to analyze the events they end up giving a very distorted picture mainly because they assume that the news they get from Western sources are true.

What is the importance of Zimbabwe some may ask? The misinformation surrounding Zimbabwe is relevant for many reasons. Firstly, for all people, misinformation hampers the ability to make proper assessments and subsequent decisions. Secondly, people of the 'Third World' are subjected to the same racism and imperial arrogance being directed towards Zimbabwe. Thirdly, it shows that because of the dominance and supposed credibility of Western media and spokespeople, they have

great influence in manufacturing reality, world views and 'truth' that excludes and denies the historical experiences and sovereignty of many 'Third World' countries.

All of this raises an important issue. How do we know what we know? Zimbabwe is but one issue, but if the mainstream media cannot be trusted on Zimbabwe, it is not likely that they should be trusted on other issues, especially issues where the domination by Western powers is being challenged. The consequences of their laziness, irresponsibility and uncritical reproduction of Western propaganda is that many people remain ignorant, including many local commentators who are in a position to influence the masses. Many people thus need to re-examine their views on Zimbabwe and President Mugabe given this inadequate and biased reporting.

The land situation in Zimbabwe is crucial to understanding the motives and interests that underlie the Zimbabwe situation. Britain never saw the importance of urgently and fairly addressing the land issue, and from the colonial period to now, it has been intent on maintaining illegitimate White control of the land, which belongs to Black Zimbabweans. What is happening now has implications for countries across the African continent, where, after political independence, White settler families have maintained control of ill-gotten land, thus perpetuating the dispossession of many indigenous Blacks who had their land stolen during the European scramble for Africa. Zimbabwe, under President Mugabe, has made the most progressive moves on the whole of the African continent in addressing the vexing land issue. For more on how the land is at the center of Zimbabwe's liberation struggles read "[Zimbabwe, BBC and illegitimate White Control](#)".

Of Sanctions, Half Truths and Outright Fabrications

Make no mistake about the situation. Things are desperate in Zimbabwe, but contrary to media reports, it is not because of the evil or excesses of Mugabe but largely because of the deliberate actions of the US, UK and other European countries working through, and/or sponsoring a complex web of actors including opposition forces, NGO's, the IMF and the Western media. Contrary to the views of many, sanctions against Mugabe are not a recent act, although the sanctions have increased in severity in recent times.

The sanctions started approximately ten years ago as the Western-instigated response to the land reclamation exercise that saw land illegitimately gained by Whites repossessed and redistributed to over 300,000 Black Zimbabweans. These sanctions include denial of access to development loans, boycotting exports from Zimbabwe, discouraging foreign investment in Zimbabwe and blocking Zimbabwe's access to technology, agricultural supplies and machinery. According to one commentator: "In November 1998, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) implemented

undeclared sanctions against Zimbabwe, by warning off potential investors, freezing loans and refusing to negotiate with Zimbabwean officials on the issue of debt. In September 1999, the IMF suspended its support for economic adjustment and reform in Zimbabwe. In October 1999, the International Development Association, a multilateral development bank, suspended all structural adjustment loans and credits to Zimbabwe; in May 2000 it suspended all other forms of new lending.”

It is understandable that some Zimbabweans support the opposition given that it is being said by Western leaders that sanctions will be lifted and life made better if Mugabe is removed. Persons inside of Zimbabwe may even have some very valid reasons for being against Mugabe, similar to many people in any country being against their present leader. That is okay if such is the case, then elections will allow them to elect and change their representatives as they want. What I am saying is that the people of Zimbabwe should determine their leader without foreign imperialistic intervention. People should be wary about puppet governments being installed to simply look after Western interests and perpetuate Western domination.

There is political violence in Zimbabwe from both sides. The police have arrested supporters of both parties for acts of violence. Mugabe has implored party supporters not to use violence; the MDC on the other hand, has encouraged the overthrow of the democratically elected government by violence.

Many reports coming from mainstream sources reporting on violence sanctioned by Mugabe appears to be fabricated. For example, supposedly after the elections, there were reports of gangs of Mugabe’s thugs going around and beating up those who voted for the opposition. This smells of fabrication, given the secret ballot system. There was one case where a report was made that ruling party thugs beat up a young child, which caused international furore, and was carried boldly by several international media houses. However, when independent doctors examined the child, it was discovered he was not injured but had a preexisting physical condition (club feet); the mother admitted she lied and allowed her child to be used for this ruse because she needed the money. The New York Times, among those that carried the story, subsequently issued a soft retraction. So they lie loudly and retract softly.

There are other examples of their fabrications being exposed, a pattern of lying that is strikingly familiar to the lies and media complicity (including the invention of weapons of mass destruction) in the lead-up to the US and UK’s illegal invasion of Iraq. Given the agenda of BBC, CNN and others, no report coming from them can be trusted. It is impossible to understand what President Mugabe’s

motives and actions really are when being relayed from his sworn enemies who have a VESTED INTEREST in demonizing him, the ruling party and their policies. That is the West's blueprint for regime change.

Blueprint for Regime Change

The events in Zimbabwe should not be totally strange to students of history as it is a simple application of the West's blueprint for regime change. This blueprint is multi-pronged and involves but is not limited to:

- 1) Deliberate lies, fabrications and distortions all in an effort to demonize and discredit the government they are trying to overthrow.
- 2) Sponsoring of opposition forces, local media groups, mercenaries, NGO's and other subversive elements to challenge the ruling party and destabilize the country. For more see "[Zimbabwe at War](#)".
- 3) Formal and informal economic sanctions and international isolation which amounts to economic terrorism, even in the eyes of one anti-Mugabe commentator. See "[The Darker Side of Sanctions](#)".
- 4) The use of organisations such as the IMF, the World Bank and even so-called independent human rights watchdogs to pressure 'problem' countries.

The imperial logic is that the more poverty, inflation and violence there is, the more desperate the local population will get to remove the leader. Also, the consistent unfair demonization of Mugabe and the ruling party has created allies for the Western intervention project as a direct consequence of the West's web of propaganda that says that Mugabe is solely responsible for the present economic and social woes of Zimbabwe. The United States sponsored 'Zimbabwe Democracy and Economic Recovery Act' of 2001 authorized President George W. Bush to fund 'opposition media' as well as 'democracy and governance programmes' inside Zimbabwe. In fact, the United States and Britain have been quite open about their desires for regime change and the fact that they are actively spending millions of dollars to accomplish that.

The Real Bullies and Dictators

I should state that I have many points of disagreement with Mugabe. However, he does not deserve the type of demonization that he is being subjected to in the Western media. In other words, it is not that Mugabe is not without his faults like any other leader, but his demonization is reflective of Western RACISM. For example, no matter how many millions Bush, Blair, Clinton and many other Western leaders kill, maim, oppress and starve with their sanctions, policies, bombs and acts of violence, they will never be mentioned in the same deep negative light.

Sensible people should easily recognize who are the ultimate dictators and bullies. It is those same countries that are accusing Zimbabwe of human rights abuses and dictatorship that have a long rap sheet of genocide, illegal interventions, economic terrorism and hypocrisy. I am not even slightly convinced that these Western powers are even minimally concerned about human rights and the welfare of ordinary Africans. The United States and Britain are quite content to support the most rabid of rulers and regimes, once it suits their strategic interests. Little mention is made in the Western press about the Ethiopian regime, headed by Meles Zenawi, who has imprisoned opposition members, stolen elections and carried out a brutal invasion of Somalia at the behest of Western powers.

It is the US, the UK and other Western imperialist regimes that have been acting like world dictators and bullies, and they are quite accustomed to supporting dictators who follow their agenda while, on the other hand, resorting to intervention and violence when the actions of a country threaten their interests or capitalist ideologies. The circumstances of Haiti, Venezuela, Iraq and Afghanistan (TO NAME A FEW) show the lengths that these dominant world powers will go to get their way. The invasion of Iraq was a classic example of their blueprint for regime change, one that involved deliberate lies about Iraq having weapons of mass destruction as a pretext for invasion and their dismissal of the objections by the international community.

The Age of Information and Misinformation

People should not be casual about accepting information; instead they should make the effort to explore alternative perspectives and sources. Given the stranglehold that mainstream ideas, views and Western media have on shaping people's world views, in this age of information and misinformation, those who have access to better information should not be naïve or lazy. I would strongly recommend that people expose themselves to a variety of perspectives to better understand what is happening in Zimbabwe. The Zimbabwe Watch website (www.zimbabwewatch.com) is a good place to start. The local media houses also need to get their act together and look at how they get their international news. However, when the public becomes more informed then they can pressure mainstream media into being more responsible.