

Government for the people, by the people

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AFRICAN DEMOCRACY FORUM



Mikhaila Cupido Musoni, ADF Coordinator

Africans taking democracy matters into their own hands

By Mikhaila Cupido Musoni

I am certain that the various media houses both in Africa and further afield could hardly keep up with what was happening on the continent this month with the sudden resignation of Ethiopian Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn sending the country into

a flurry of concerns about ethnic violence breaking out. Jacob Zuma too is no longer president in South Africa, however he made it perfectly clear that he did not agree with the decision of the ruling ANC to have him step down.

Africa it would seem is riddled with *big man* politics that we cannot shake or can we?

I am of the view that we can – South Africa on Valentine's Day gave credence to that. Yes everything came to a tipping point just then but it had been nine long years of a Jacob Zuma presidency in which time South Africa had to deal with the ridicule of a president who on technicalities got off free of the charges of rape. In his tenure the country could never speak of women's rights, or eradicating gender based violence. Never in that time could women

empowerment be promoted or even adequately addressed not with a president who was the very antecedent of belittling the role of women in South African society.

Despite his song and dance, and his unwavering support from those who benefitted from his presidency there was behind the scenes tireless working on court cases, opinion pieces and peaceful marches by lobby groups, civil society organizations who despite the sometimes dismal look of things carried on creating awareness about the murky politics that had become the order of the day in South Africa. So too I think that Chapter 9 organizations especially the former Public Protector Thuli Madonsela considered the demise of a rather disheartened Jacob Zuma a great victory for democracy and good governance in the country. One should never

underestimate the role of passionate citizenry and dedication to upholding the laws of the land and through that effort holding leaders accountable to the people that they serve and should be on the receiving end of sound forward thinking leadership.

South Africa at present moment in lieu of Valentine's Day has listened to their new president Cyril Ramaphosa speak, he has filled the nation with hope that has been missing for numerous years. And though the ANC can claim the victory of signing off the presidency of Jacob Zuma, it was in fact Civil Society and the will of the people who got them to making that decision. If not for them the charade that was the Zuma regime would have gone on for another 18 months.

Change is possible and imperative on the African continent in the 54-African nations and its people who call the continent home. And it is the obligation for us in civil society and the man on the street at the grass roots level to make sure that leaders are reminded that they serve at the behest of a people. At the risk of making a mockery of the English language and giving in to the whims of the social media age it is imperative that I state that the ousting of a president as we've seen in South Africa and Zimbabwe at the start of 2018 "was did" and as such all of Africa where the population feels that they have a government

that is not serving and or meeting their needs "can did it."

At the African Democracy Forum we have been in full swing too in our advocacy of democracy, human rights and good governance. We will be hosting a conference on *Democracy in Africa - The way forward* which will take place in Kigali, Rwanda on 24th and 25th May 2018 alongside Africa Day. We hope that you will participate and share experiences of democratization from around Africa. Please do check out our website and social media pages for more info on the conference.



The Management Committee Members, with The Coordinator (Mikhaila) and t

Management Committee Meeting, January 2018

The African Democracy Forum held a Management Committee meeting from 25th – 26th January, 2018 at Park Inn Hotel in Kigali, Rwanda. It hosted committee members from across the

continent to chart the way forward for the organization. Members who attend are, Terence Chitapi from Zimbabwe, Jean-Robert Ilunga Numbi from the Democratic Republic of Congo, Kingsley Bangwell (secretary) from Nigeria, Djingarey Maiga (Vice-Chairperson) from Mali,

Maximilienne C. Ngo Mbe (treasurer) from Cameroun and Dr. Joseph Nkurunziza (chairperson) as well as Mikhaila Cupido Musoni (coordinator) from Rwanda. The objectives of that meeting were:

- Interview prospective candidates to fill the position of Communications Officer
- To discuss the *Democracy in Africa – The way forward* conference
- To formulate action plans in relation to ADF activities
- To strengthen the capacity of the ADF through funding mechanisms.

The position of Communications Officer needed to be filled after the Communications Manager

Leila Chibole left at the end of October. The interviews for this position took place on the 25th of January 2018 at the Park Inn Hotel in Kiyovu where the Management Committee meeting was held. After a series of questions and a discussion between members who interviewed 3 candidates,

the position was offered to Gisele Rugwiro.

Other than the job interviews, the management committee members discussed the implementations of the ADF Strategic Plan which include improving its website and increasing membership. Members gave suggestions on how they can each contribute to increasing the organization's visibility. The management committee members also talked about introducing and implementing a Code of Conduct that would exist to set standards of how members treat each other and how they should hold each other accountable.

Among the things that were discussed, is the African Union Youth competition as well as the conference on Democracy. For more details and updates regarding

these exciting events we are planning, follow our accounts on Twitter and Facebook.



Gisele Rugwiro, new appointed Communications Officer

NEWS WITHIN AFRICA



Hailemariam Desalegn

What's next for Ethiopia?

As Hailemariam Desalegn, the former Prime Minister of Ethiopia, resigns and becomes the first leader of this country to relinquish power willingly, all eyes are on Ethiopia on what is next and what to expect from the ruling coalition. Things are quickly changing and a state of emergency has been declared and there's popular demand for democracy, the rule of law and political and economic fairness. To find out more, click on the link below and read what author Yohannes Gedamu had to say in his article.

<https://theconversation.com/premier-quitting-and-state-of-emergency-signal-urgent-need-for-reform-in-ethiopia-91966>

The man behind the Umkhonto We Sizwe struggle song umshini wami (bring my machine) Jacob Zuma has finally left office and resigned as President of South Africa his final words to the people not part of his formal speech "we'll meet somewhere". It would be an understatement to

South Africa: Ready to be democratic again

by Mikhaila Cupido Musoni

say that South Africans released a collective sigh of relief. The not so friendly words of youth on the streets of Johannesburg were evidence of that. It has been a marathon month in South Africa and I doubt that Valentine's Day will ever from here on in be viewed as a day of love not after the Valentine's Days that the country has experienced of late.

But the most important thing to remember is that justice albeit longwinded is in the end served with Oscar Pistorius behind bars and Jacob Zuma out of office. The latter as Head of State despite Jessie Duarte Deputy Secretary General of the ANC's best efforts will always be synonymous with the belittling of women's rights and for the social torment experienced by his accuser Khwezi; for his lavish home Nkandla at the expense of the South African taxpayer and for the fleeting hiring and firing of finance ministers at the expense of the South African economy. He

stood at the helm of our ship as ratings agencies bestowed junk status on our economy and the Rand plummeted to record lows.

But today as we await the State of the Nation address by newly elected President of the Republic of South Africa Cyril Ramaphosa the events of just two-days ago



Cyril Ramaphosa, newly appointed South African President

seems like a fleeting memory Jacob Zuma is already history.

For a few scary moments there it would seem that the *rainbow nation* would lose all credibly that the freedom we

experienced provided by democratic values was all but gone. Being resurrected in such a fashion has been a blessing in disguise but also a rude awakening to how



Former South African President Jacob Zuma

fickle democracy can be. How important it is to protect it, value it and abide by its principles to ensure that it never accidentally slips through our fingers.

The true victor in the drama that has unfurled in South Africa was not Cyril Ramaphosa who has been waiting in the wind for the moment to lead the country after being sidelined by the father of our nation Nelson Mandela. It was in fact the organization that is the African National Congress a political movement that has been a part of the tapestry of South Africa for over a hundred years. Despite its members allowing Zexit to drag on unnecessarily in the end the ANC made it clear that no one person is above the needs of the country and its people and no one person can hold an organization founded on democratic principles and putting the needs of the people first ransom.

The corrupt reign of Jacob Zuma should serve as a lesson not only to the South African electorate but to the whole of Africa and beyond that it is the responsibility of every citizen to make sure that democracy is alive and well. Democracy is not the business of political leaders in some far removed place. Voter participation, steady involvement in community affairs is everyone's business as it is in everyone's best interest. Leaders should be held accountable and should be seen to lead with "humility, faithfulness and dignity" to quote the newly elected President.

The losses experienced by the ANC over the course of a few years and the strengthening of opposition leaders in the country in the form of the Economic Freedom Fighter's leader Julius Malema should serve as the warning knell to all leaders across

Africa who have become comfortable in their position, who have forgotten that they serve at the behest of the people that democracy can and must triumph and that the people must and will prosper. The quiet coup in Zimbabwe and the ousting of Robert Mugabe serves as even greater evidence of that.

Both these Southern African countries – South Africa and Zimbabwe now look toward the future with a little more confidence, with a little more pride in what it is that they can offer their people, the continent and the world. And people like Zuma and Mugabe will be remembered only as those leaders who once for a brief moment allowed democracy and its tenets to waiver.

More news within Africa

Zimbabwe: [Tsvangirai, the longest opposition leader to Robert Mugabe, dies after witnessing the fall of his rival but not long enough to see his legacy live. Click on the link below and read more about his incomplete legacy and how Zimbabweans mourned one of their favorite.](https://mg.co.za/article/2018-02-22-tsvangirai-left-an-incomplete-legacy) <https://mg.co.za/article/2018-02-22-tsvangirai-left-an-incomplete-legacy>

Mali, Cameroon, South Sudan, among countries will hold general elections this year, as Africans on the continent at large; have decided democracy is the only way to go. <https://qz.com/1169321/eight-african-2018-elections-to-watch-egypt-sierra-leone-south-sudan-mali-zimbabwe-libya-cameroon-dr-congo/>

Libya: [Growing concern as the number of migrants from Libya keeps increasing as well as the uncertainties over the country's future as a functioning state continues to mount.](http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-42915867) www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-42915867

Upcoming Events

platforms for more news updates regarding this and other possible upcoming events.

The African Democracy Forum will be hosting this conference Democracy in Africa – the way forward in Kigali, Rwanda and aim to bring together scholars, civil servants and civil society representatives familiar and expert on democracy in Africa to debate and discuss the state of it. This conference will focus on dealing with the impact, role and importance of democracy in Africa. Looking at a modern Africa, one that is part of “a new world order” joined together with the world “to achieve the universal aspirations of mankind – peace and security, freedom, and the rule of law”. Because the majority of Africans prefer democracy to any kind of government and that there’s a need for it, it is very important that members of different Civil Society organizations gather together and debate on what democracy in Africa is at present and what it should be.

This conference will aim to discuss the following topics:

- The African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Good Governance – positives, challenges and country involvement.
- The African Union and the challenges faced by democratization in Africa (conflict, terrorism/extremism, the role of religion on African politics).
- The role of women and youth, political parties especially the ones in opposition and the role of Civil Society and their participation in democratic consolidation in Africa.
- The way forward for democracy.

This event will be in conjunction with Africa Day and will be an opportunity for scholars from different African regions to share their knowledge. We will be sharing updates about this event on our Facebook and Twitter page and welcome any feedback or suggestions regarding what will be addressed during the conference. Please follow us on these social media

EVENT TO LOOK OUT FOR



African Union Youth Competition

The African Union Youth competition is an event we are planning for the young bright minds with a chance to win a trip to the AU headquarters. Please follow our Twitter and Facebook account for news and updates on this competition.

Special Recognition

We take this opportunity to recognize and thank the National Endowment for Democracy the continued support they provide in helping us enhance the capacity and promote the coordination of the African Democracy Forum and its members as a collective voice for deepening democracy in Africa. We also thank Never Again Rwanda for hosting us and helping us to continue engaging in various activities in line with the program proposal to ensure that the objectives and goals of the project are achieved within the established time frame.

We look forward to the work we will get to do together in the near future.

Social Media Links:



Q & A with the Chairperson

<https://web.facebook.com/AfricanDemocracyForum/?ref=bookmarks>

- What is your take regarding the current state of democracy in Africa?
- As someone with plenty of experience working with non-profit organizations, what are some of the challenges NGOs focusing on democracy have faced?
- What do you think African Democracy Forum can do in relation to those challenges?
- Should Africa copy the same democratic system witnessed in Europe, Asia or America? If not, why?



Dr. Joseph Nkurunziza, Chairperson for the ADF Management Committee