



SUNDAY SUN Sunday 7 March 2010

NOW HEAR THIS! WITH **KENNETH MESHOE**

Destroying what you have means nobody wins ...

FOR THE PAST few weeks I've been trying to understand why so many people become violent when they exercise their constitutional right to protest. It is understandable when community members become angry at politicians or government officials that lie to them. It is understandable when they toyi toyi in the streets because of poor service delivery and government's failure to deliver on promises.

But what I don't understand is why they trash the streets, block the roads with burning tyres and throw stones at passing cars when they protest. Does the burning of tyres and emptying of rubbish bins in our streets improve service delivery? Do we really like filth or what's our problem?

I'm just asking.

Why attack foreigners and loot their businesses when they protest? Is it because of Africa's sin Number One ... which is jealousy?

Why do some people act like they will gain more things by destroying what they already have? Why do students burn down the only library they have because they are unhappy with the increase of fees?

I'm just asking.

When passengers complain about insufficient trains or buses in a particular route, why do they stone and burn the few they have? If trains are late and passengers stone them, will they be on time?

I'm just asking.

The other thing I don't understand is why a very educated Head of State with about seven earned degrees like President Robert Mugabe, would think that to eradicate poverty, you have to force foreign companies to hand over control of their companies to local Zimbabweans by selling off at least 51% of company shares to them.

This head of state, who is responsible for destroying a once thriving Zimbabwean economy, now wants to finish off the little that's still left. It is estimated that 9 out of 10

people in Zimbabwe are unemployed. So, where will they find the money to buy majority shares in foreign companies doing business there? What makes President Mugabe and his advisors think that foreign investors will come into their country when they know they will be denied the right to run and control their companies as legal owners?

In case somebody does not understand what I am referring to, the Zimbabwean Youth Development, Indigenisation and Empowerment Minister last month published regulations forcing all businesses owned by foreigners to explain in the next 45 days how they plan to cede 51% of their holdings to local Zimbabweans. Is this justice and the way to grow the economy? I don't think so.

FOR THOSE OF you who want to know why I've raised the problems of Zimbabwe, listen to this.

The Indigenisation Minister said the Indigenisation law is an affirmative action meant to address past imbalances in wealth ownership. He said, "all we seek to achieve is a determined fight against poverty. It is an affirmative action meant to address past imbalances."

He might have thought he was copying South Africa's affirmative action policies. But he is wrong.

The South African government does not rob companies of their majority shareholding as they are smart enough to know that such actions would collapse businesses and prevent foreign companies from investing in our country.

Taking what does not belong to you by force or without permission is nothing but stealing.

Job creation and high productivity levels are the best way to grow the economy.

And investors will only invest where they know their assets will be safe.

■ **The Rev Kenneth Meshoe MP is the president of the African Christian Democratic Party**