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The Salarygate Scandal in the Zimbabwe Parastatals Sector: Another Darkside of the Nation (2013 – 2014)

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The Salarygate Scandal in the Zimbabwe Parastatals Sector: Another Darkside of the Nation (2013 – 2014)

Dr. Silas Luthingo Rusvingo

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I. Introduction

As the stories of mega-salaries of the bosses of key parastatals that are failing to pay low level employees at times for several months continue to emerge since January 2014 many questions raised by concerned Zimbabweans have remained unanswered much to the public outrage. The questions being flown around in the streets or in the hide-outs of people's homes where they feel safe from some bigotry and any other public places include whether a crime has been committed or not by the high earning Chief Executive Officer (CEOs) apart from moral blameworthiness. The citizens of Zimbabwe want to know whether there is any public code that has been violated or not or that gives the way forward in case of mega salaries being unearthed. In search for such a document the crisis report has come across the new constitution of Zimbabwe (Amendment 20) Act as one such document which clarifies the basic values and principles of public administration in Section 194.

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For instance it has recently been made public that Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation (ZBC) Chief Executive Officer, Happison Muchechetere grossed about US$ 40 000.00 and got about US$ 250 000.00 as a housing allowance while many employees at the public broadcaster were not being paid for months. The constitution (Section 194) says

a) A high standard of professional ethics must be promoted and maintained and
b) Efficient and economic use of resources must be promoted

Could it have been prudent use of financial resources, to pay a top official 'entertainment allowance of US$ 3 000.00 while several demoralized employees of the same public institution went unpaid for several months?

The constitutional clause could also be of relevance to the Executive in terms of the funds gobbled in foreign trips, big contingencies of government ministers in terms of economic use of resources.

Notable is the public admission by media, information and Broadcasting services Permanent Secretary George Charamba that while ordinary employees continued to go unpaid at the supposed broadcaster, the information pertaining to the ZBC CEO's salary was suppressed ahead of harmonized elections in July 2013 (Staff Reporter 2014).

In order to expose the extend of the mega salary storm in the parastatals sector in Zimbabwe a short relevant Literature Review was carried out and below are the details of how the Author carried it out.

II. The Short Literature Reviewcarried out: Mega Salary Storm in the Parastatals Sector in Zimbabwe

Zimbabwe has 78 parastatals and many local authorities which are saddled with rampant corruption. Corporate governance at a number of state enterprises and parastatals is alien amid allegations that the responsible ministers were running the show.

Early this year, government proposed that all parastatal Chief Executive Officers be paid US$ 6 000.00 as a temporary measure as the government reviewed the salary structures amid revelations some

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were earning over US$ 40 000.00 in salaries and allowances (Mtomba 2014). Of the 78 parastatals those that are fingered in the mega salary scam are:

- Zimbabwe Electricity Supply Authority (ZESA)
- Air Zimbabwe
- Harare City Council (HCC)
- Public Service Medical Aid Society (PSMAS) and
- Zimbabwe broadcasting Corporation (ZBC) (Mtomba 2014)

In order to expose the full extent of the mega salary scourge in Zimbabwe the Author lined up a group of eminent personalities from the private media to sound out their opinion on what was going on in the Zimbabwe parastatal's sector vis-à-vis the mega salary storm that had taken a firm grip of the sector since January 2014. And to start the ball rolling, the Author called upon Matenga (2014) of the Newsday to share with him what he had to say about the pandemic of mega salaries in the Zimbabwe parastatal sector. For more details on what he had to say these are coming your way in just a moment.

a) 18 Town House Bosses gobble 500k monthly (Matenga 2014)

According to Matenga (2014) of the Newsday, the Town Clerk Tendai Mahachi and his bloated 18 management team at Town House were reported gobbling a whopping US$ 500 000 in monthly salaries and allowances. The shocking revelations of salaries at Town House Managers came at a time when service delivery was at an all-time low and when government had threatened to deal with the obscene salaries earned by top executives at different parastatals and local authorities. The irony of this is that the Harare City Councilors including the mayor Bernard Manyenyeni did not know anything about these obscene salaries to pose the question: What type of administration is this? This came at a time when workers from the Water Department had as at end of January 2014 not been paid since November 2013. Honourable Minister Chombo of Local government had gone public about his intention not to approve the Harare City Council (HCC) budget until he got sight of the schedule of these obscene salaries.

> "I am yet to get a report (on salaries) but I sent a team to work on that. By Monday (yesterday) I will have reports for Harare, Bulawayo and Chitungwiza.If we do not get that then we will not approve the (Councils) budget because we want to link it to that", Honourable Minister Chombo said. "We want them well said but we do not want obscene salaries for them. They should also sign 12 months long contracts to perform certain functions. They will be performance-based and if they fail there won't be any reason to renew their contracts and keep them. You cannot give them big contracts to sit on their laurels for long".

This latest expose was expected to brew a storm at Town House and with the general public as it coincided with the disclosure of other obscene salaries by executives at other public institutions such as the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation (ZBC) and Premier Service Medical Aid Society (PSMAS).

Deputy Minister of Media, Information and Broadcasting Services, Honourable Supa Mandiwanzira recently told the Press that ZBC Chief Executive Officer Happison Muchechetere currently on suspension pending a forensic audit of the institution was drawing a salary of US$ 40 000.00 from the ailing parastatal (Matenga 2014).

Former ZBC Board Chairman and PSMAS boss Cuthbert Dube was said to be earning a whopping US$ 230 000.00 from the heavily indebted medical aid society (Matenga 2014).

In an unrelated development the Chief Executive of PSMAS Cuthbert Dube had been fired. For more details on this these are coming your way in just a moment.

b) Cuthbert Dube fired (Staff Reporter 2014)

Premier Services Medical Aid Society (PSMAS) Chief Executive and Board Chairman at ZBC had been fired following a public outcry over his obscene US$ 210 000 monthly salary. This development had come amid reports that the PSMAS top management was gobbling at least US$ 1.3 million in monthly salaries and allowances (Staff Reporter 2014).

PSMAS owed various service providers US$ 38 million as at 31 December 2013. Media Information and Broadcasting Services Minister Honourable Jonathan Moyo said corrupt salaries paid to heads of parastatals in the country would be dealt with.

> "We have false, corrupt salaries that pause a serious challenge to the public sector where some people are earning as much as US$ 230 000 in monthly salaries and allowances", he said. "People in business do not make that much in profit in a month. I have also heard of people earning US$ 27 000.00 in parastatals. These salaries cannot be appropriate for a new economy".

The Coalition Against Corruption (CAC) had in the aftermath of all this greed, looting and corruption come out blazing their guns in attack of this vice which had taken a firm grip on the Zimbabwe cash ailing economy. Details coming to you in just a moment.

c) Government should come hard on PSMAS Chefs (CAC information department 2014)

The Coalition Against Corruption (CAC), the leading ant-corruption organization in Zimbabwe had strict terms condemned the greed displayed by PSMAS

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CEO Cuthbert Dube who was reported earning a whopping US$ 230 000 in obscene salary and allowances. Such a monthly salary for one individual is totally unjustifiable given the current economic environment where a majority of citizens were earning salaries that are way below the poverty datum line (CAC Information Department 2014).

What further puzzles CAC and the Zimbabwean people in general is that PSMAS is a public entity with lowly paid public or civil servants being the largest contributors and their hard-earned little money is then swindled by a few greedy people such as the PSMAS bosses who neither care nor have mercy for the poor people in our society. CAC again demands that government repossesses all assets belonging to the few top chefs since this will go a long way in addressing the issue of looting public funds under the guise of salary increments (CAC Information Department 2014).

CAC calls upon all Workers' Unions in the country to vigorously resist and confront company management who award themselves hefty salaries while lowly paid employees struggle to even get their meager salaries. The great German philosopher once said,

> "Workers of the world unite. You have nothing to lose but your chains".

For our country to prosper like America and China let us reject greed, looting and corruption in both government and the private sector (CAC Information Department 2014).

But on mega salaries in the parastatals and state owned enterprises the paranoid government of Zimbabwe has always flattered to deceive. It makes a lot of noises heard even in far flung places like China and America. But as time goes on the noise dies down to forget there was a mega salary storm. For you all the people who were caught up in the mega salary scandal none has been apprehended by the police, prosecuted, tried and sentenced.

To resonate with what the Author has just said above it was ironic to hear reports of PSMAS CEO, Cuthbert Dube being given a 'golden' handshake as if to say thank you for financially bleeding PSMAS. A person like Cuthbert Dube deserves custodial sentence in place of a 'golden' handshake. Details coming your way in just a moment.

d) Dube could pocket US$ 20 million (Chirara 2014)

It came as a shocker to the Author when he leant from Chirara (2014) of Daily News that despite the rocking noises made about Dube's obscene salary of US$ 230 000 per month he had in fact been retired and not deservedly fired for criminal abuse of office. According to Chirara (2014) retired PSMAS Chief Executive Cuthbert Dube could walk away with a tantalizing 'golden' handshake of US$ 20million but for what? Paying himself an obscene salary of US$230 000.00 per month from a debt ridden organization funded by lowly paid civil servants whose salaries are hardly US$ 300.00 per month which is way below the poverty datum line of a family of six amounting to US$550 per month (Staff Reporter 2014). Mwari rambai (meaning God forbid)

What this effectively means is that the debt-ridden medical services provider could be forced to fork out as much as US$ 18.6 million in terminal benefits as part of Dube's exit package. PSMAS is currently reeling from a debt of over US$ 38 million being unpaid bills for medical services rendered to its members who stand at more than 600 000 (Chirara 2014).

Human resources experts however, said the long serving Executive should have been fired, without any terminal benefits for failing to fulfill his mandate. Memory Nguwi a managing consultant at Industrial Psychology Consultants said Dube did not deserve to be paid as he had failed to fulfill his mandate during the time he was at the helm of PSMAS (Chirara 2014).

The Author for his part argues that Cuthbert Dube should have been jailed for three life terms without the option of a fine for his criminal abuse of office. What was done to Dube was again a criminal abuse of justice.

Members of Parliament (MPs) unanimously called for the indictment of Dube to resonate with the Author's lonely cry that Dube should not have been allowed never again to see the light of day in Zimbabwe. Details of this coming to you right away.

e) MPs want Dube indicted (Zvauya 2014)

Members of Parliament had in the aftermath of all this pandemonium caused by Cuthbert Dube ordered that he be prosecuted for misappropriation of client's funds. Ruth Labode, a non-constituency Member of Parliament and a medical doctor by profession had noted the decision by PSMAS to relieve Dube of his duties at PSMAS but recommended that he be prosecuted for misappropriation of member's funds. The law makers were unanimous in their call for a probe into the donations made to Zifa[2] by Cuthbert Dube who also happens to be the chairperson of Zifa, another association which, like PSMAS is also in financial turmoil. Cuthbert Dube also hooked Mavis Gumbo, a PSMAS Senior Staffer to Zifa where she is also chairperson of Women's football apart from being a Zifa Board member.

> "In light of these anomalies the Committee calls for forensic audit into PSMAS funds handling given its public service handling and numerous donations to entities like Zifa, which Dube and Gumbo made", Labode said. "The committee

[2] Zifa is an acronym for Zimbabwe Football Association which is the mother body responsible for running soccer in Zimbabwe. What is also a puzzle to any person of sober mind is that Zifa is perennially an association in financial turmoil to make Dube a person associated with organizations that are always in financial turmoil.

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notes with concern the interlink ages and recurrence of similar names like Cuthbert Dube and Mavis Gumbo in PSMAS, Zifa and Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation (ZBC) all being troubled institutions with reported gross abuse of public funds by top management," said Labode who is also a medical doctor by profession.

The Committee also recommended that the entire PSMAS board be blacklisted from sitting on any public institution's board. Dube was reportedly earning a salary of US$ 230 000.00 with the other eight senior Directors earning US$ 60 000.00 each per month at a time the organization owed service providers US$ 30 million in unpaid bills (Chirara 2014).

The Combined Harare Residents Association (CHRA)[3] was going ballistic about the payment of high salaries to management while service delivery was going to the dogs. For more details on this issue the next paragraph has more details on the issue.

f) Probe Harare City Council (Combined Harare Residents Association 2014)

Recent media reports have revealed that the 18 bosses were gobbling an average half a million in salaries and if benefits are added then the figure might double. The scandalous act has been happening in the wake of deteriorating service delivery in Harare which had hit rock bottom according to public perception index. CHRA has traditionally been calling for the elucidation of salaries for top management in a bid to satisfy the principle of accountability and transparency at Town House. CHRA notes with disappointment that the top management of council is literally running the City down whilst fattening their pockets with ratepayers' money at the expense of service delivery which was deteriorating day in day out (CHRA 2014).

Harare City Council to begin with does not need 18 managers to run the City departments. In that vein it defeats the spirit of the Cabinet directive of allocating 30% of total revenue collected to administration and personnel whilst 70% goes to service delivery. Prior to 2000 when water woes were alien to the City, Harare was manned by seven directors and the city was able to deliver water to all suburbs without fail. To date we have 18 directors with some departments even having two directors doing one job notably the finance department and the health department. Harare City Council last year proposed a budget of US$ 291 million which is yet to be approved by the minister.In view of the proposed budget this proves CHRA's consistent position that council is spending more on salaries ahead of service delivery mandate (CHRA 2014).

In his attack on soft measures being taken against corruption then rampant in the country, Kajau (2014) had unkind words for the powers that be. More on the story that follows as below.

g) Take stern measures against corruption (Kajau 2014)

While urging the interim management at PSMAS to quickly mop up the mess at the debt-ridden medical services provider the scandalous situation at the ZBC demanded stern measures being taken against corruption than treat some with kid gloves. How can a corrupt official continue to enjoy the same obscene salary and benefits while he is facing serious allegations of corruption and mismanagement of people and company resources? While the CEO Muchechetere was taking home a net pay of a whopping US$ 40 000.00 per month excluding perks lower level employees at ZBC had gone for an incredible seven months without pay and most of these people had their families to look after. *Mwari navadzimu rambai!* (meaning God and the Ancestral Spirits please forbid!) (Kajau 2014).

According to Kajau (2014) who was blowing hot and cold during his presentation he revealed that personal interests are taking precedence ahead of normative corporate governance business ethics. The government is hereby urged to go deep in the investigation of corruption and its life threatening consequences to wider society. The unpleasant consequences which was blamed on personal interests taking precedence ahead of normative good corporate governance. An incredible high fatality rate of 4 200 dying in a space of 6 – 12 months was just not good enough. And the blame was the failure by the Harare City Council to provide safe and drinkable water to the high density and low income suburb of Budiriro in Harare (Wikipedia 2014).

It is not surprising that the Author will forever regret why he was born in a developing Third world country. When every concerned Zimbabwean thought Cuthbert Dube of PSMAS was now dead and buried someone for lack of better conscience was at it one more time. Instead of preaching words of pacifying the minds of the aggrieved, someone in the name of the Honourable Minister of Information Media and Broadcasting Services, Jonathan Moyo chose to break the hearts of many Zimbabweans when he totally went off-side in his weird remarks on the Dube issue. For more details these are on their way coming to you in just a moment.

h) Cuthbert Dube off the hook

Making a wrong decision is not illegal – it gets you fired (Muzulu 2014).

[3] Combined Harare Residents Association (CHRA) is a membership driven Association with more than 25 000 members whose mission is to force the Harare City Council to provide value for money service delivery to the Harare Residents and ratepayers (Staff Reporter 2014).

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> "Former ZBC Chairman Cuthbert Dube will not be prosecuted for administrative bungling at the state broadcasting where he approved outrageous salaries and allowances for top management; said Information, Media and Broadcasting Services Minister Honourable Professor Jonathan Moyo who inflicted more pain and anger on the various stakeholders when he added; that booting him out was enough punishment."

But this was against a background where the affected stakeholders wanted more pain and suffering on the delinquent former PSMAS CEO. For criminal abuse of office Dube stands accused of negotiating and approving pay hikes of Senior managers without the approval of the entire board. For unilaterally increasing the salary of the former ZBC CEO, Dube had done nothing illegal. Really? Is that not criminal abuse of office for which someone is criminally accountable?

> "Making a wrong decision or taking a wrong decision is not illegal – it gets you fired. We have already taken an administrative action by relieving him of his duties", Honourable Minister Moyo said.

The Honourable Minister went on to make a fool of himself when he added that Happison Muchechetere, the former ZBC CEO had also been sent on forced leave with full benefits. For a man facing a serious criminal offence of criminal abuse of office where is the pain and suffering on the man as payment for his wrong doing which caused suffering to wider society? This again sent the Author to silently protest that he was regretting the day he was born in a poor Third World developing country like Zimbabwe. This was a political decision taken on a criminal offence instead of a competent Court doing it. *Mwari rambai!* (meaning God forbid!) (Muzulu 2014).

To add salt to the festering wounds of all the grieving stakeholders in this matter the Honourable Minister had announced that the forensic audit at the public broadcaster was not going to be completed in the next six months when the aggrieved stakeholders wish was that this could have happened yesterday for the culprit to immediately pay for his abominable sins than to postpone his suffering to a later date. The problem with us Zimbabweans in this day and era is that people are taking the abnormal to be the normal. How can one exonerate a man of culpable homicide in a fatal road accident?

> "After appointing an audit company we do not expect any preliminary findings within the next six months as the exercise should, be very comprehensive", Honourable Professor Moyo said (Muzulu 2014).

The Honourable Minister said the forensic audit would determine what the national broadcaster had been prejudiced of as there was enough evidence already to show that some senior managers abused ZBC funds and assets in a manner that displayed gross negligence and criminal conduct. Why then are you having Cuthbert Dube and Happison Muchechetere of PSMAS and ZBC respectively off the hook like that? What does the body language of the Honourable Minister convey to a person of sober mind? A political decision taken on a criminal offence instead of a competent court does it for us. Barely after he had been relieved of his duties as ZBC Board Chairman, Dube was unceremoniously 'retired' from PSMAS where he was CEO after it was revealed that he awarded himself an exorbitant basic salary amounting to US$ 230 000.00 at the health insurance provider. What is ironic about this aforementioned mega salary is that even the USA President, Barrack Obama, does not earn that kind of obscene salary which is criminal through and through. That salary made Dube arguably the highest paid executive not only in Zimbabwe but regionally and globally (Muzulu 2014).

Much to the grief of his affected stakeholders his astonishing luck did not stop there, with the Gods smiling at Cuthbert Dube, he went on to comfortably win the chairmanship of Zimbabwe Federation Association in April 2014 and despite the heavy condemnation and criticism from the soccer fraternity in Zimbabwe, Dube received hearty congratulations from the Football International Football Associations (FIFA)President, Sepp Blatter and from all the people who matter in world football (Mashaya 2014).

Another issue which sent the Author again regretting his birthday in Zimbabwe is the bungled suspension of the Harare Town Clerk on account of the same scandal – salary gate. Details on the heart wrenching story coming your way in just a moment.

i) Harare Town Clerk suspended (Matenga 2014)

Every event or transaction in the mismanaged Harare City Council is never short of drama and theatrics. It was quite inorder the Harare mayor Bernard Manyenyeni had taken the unprecedented move to suspend Tendai Mahachi, the Harare Town Clerk to pave way for unhindered investigations into his shenanigans at Town House which stood Town Clerk accused of:

- Unsatisfactory discharge of his duties as the Harare Town Clerk and
- The pivotal role the Town Clerk played in the payment of mega salaries to a bloated management of 18 managers who were reportedly earning a whopping US$ 500 000 in perks and allowances.

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Administratively the move by Manyenyeni was above board and little did he know he had shaken a hornet's nest (Matenga 2014).

The Local Government Minister Honourable Ignatius Chombo and Harare Town Clerk Tendai Mahachi are like Siamese twins which means that an attack on Honourable Chombo is an attack on Tendai Mahachi and vice versa. By suspending Tendai Mahachi, Harare Mayor had suspended the Local government minister Honourable Chombo. On hearing that Tendai Mahachi the Minister's protégé had been suspended Honourable minister Chombo wasted little precious time to call Bernard Manyenyeni to his office, where he was read the riot act. He either had to stand by his move to suspend Mahachi and risk himself losing his Harare mayoral position or leaves the Honourable Minister to re-instate the Harare Town Clerk Tendai Mahachi and Bernard Manyenyeni continues in his position as Harare Mayor (Masowe 2014) (Mabhandi 2014) (Mawoyo 2014) (Tongai 2014) (Pamire 2014).

The next paragraph, a respite from the rising salary gate scandal in Zimbabwe is a Madanhire (2014) lecture on corruption being bad for democracy in Zimbabwe. Details on this coming your way in just a moment.

j) Corruption is bad for democracy (Madanhire 2014)

In his inaugural speech on his swearing in ceremony on 22 August 2014 His Excellence President Mugabe talked tough against endemic corruption and vowed to fight it for which he pledged government's commitment. But alas not enough had been done to fight the scourge of corruption threatening to wreack the economy of Zimbabwe tottering on the verge of collapse. A recent Afrobarometer survey astonishingly revealed that one in every five people in Africa had paid one or more times to a bureaucratic just to get a document which he was supposed to get for free were it not for corruption. In Zimbabwe it had become worse than this. The Anti-corruption Trust of Southern Africa had surprisingly found that graft among traffic police was worsening with some officials having accumulated so much wealth which they could not justify against their meager monthly salaries. Recent reports exposing obscene public sector salaries with top managers earning as much as US$ 230 000 per month, not per year. And all this trash coming at a time when the Zimbabwean economy is regressing because of its poor performance since after the hotly disputed 31 July 2013 poll. As many as 700 firms closed shop last year in 2013 mainly because the Zimbabwean economy is not performing to expectations while essential national obligations like health education, to name just a few, all have had to share a meagre US$ 4,1 billion cake (Madanhire 2014).

The delay in announcing the 2014 budget by the Honourable Finance Minister Patrick Chinamasa pointed to the bankruptcy of a government and it was most unthinkable that those in public office could be sanctioned by government or state appointed boards to behave so shamelessly over the management of meagre public funds. Given this trend it is important that the government moves with speed in its fight against corruption. The social injustice of earning a whopping salary of US$ 230 000 per month in the midst of such abject poverty when 60% of the Zimbabwean population do not know when and where the next meal will come from, cannot go unchallenged. The greed by a privileged few is just too much to cause discomfort to a few with better conscience, who among them is the Author. Deterrent punitive action must of necessity being taken against the errant public officials than mere suspensions let alone dismissals from duty while they walk away with their public loot and in some cases huge packages. This is gross breach of public trust that needs to be urgently and publicly dealt with to assure the nation's struggling masses that the government is at least on their side. The corruption playing out in the country today hurts the poor and weak most 60% of whom live in abject poverty without basic services like water, electricity or shelter because there is supposedly not enough resources to build new infrastructure, improve or extend it to new areas of urban or rural expansion. This is reason enough for His Excellence President Mugabe to bring sanity and transparent corporate governance culture that promotes and upholds an ethos of honest stewardship in Zimbabwe. Graft is bad for democracy because people who 'perceive' higher levels of corruption within state owned council, ZBC, PSMAS, among others, and those who have engaged in petty corruption are more likely not to value or respect democracy. While on the economic front, corruption is known to discourage investment as it increases the cost of business and at the same time unleash uncertainty over profits (Madanhire 2014).

That there are some heartless people in the developing third world country like Zimbabwe is evident for all to see and appreciate. The sad story about the ZBC employees is certainly not for people of a nervous disposition. Details on the story coming to your way in just a moment.

k) ZBC employees appeal to Mugabe over salaries (Staff Reporter 2014)

The disgruntled and voiceless ZBC employees had not been paid for an incredible three months. Just imagine what would happen to you if you were not paid for a month, let alone three calendar months. The only option available to them after exhausting all other avenues was to appeal to His Excellence President Mugabe to intervene and address their plight. In a letter dated 30 may 2013 addressed to His Excellence President Mugabe but not signed for fear of victimization by a heartless ZBC corporate leadership with a poverty

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of conscience had said that their patience with the heartless leadership was wearing thin. They were failing to buy food, pay rentals for accommodation and school fees for their children some of whom had since dropped out, simply because they were not being paid their hard earned salary by the country's sole broadcasting authority. The letter code named "save our souls" (SOS) had been copied to the Information, Media and Broadcasting Corporation Minister Honourable Moyo and the heartless ZBC Management (Staff Reporter 2014).

The hungry and bone-looking employees said, with tears welling up in their eyes, the fat looking ZBC Management was arrogant whenever they are asked for their salaries and better working conditions, meagre and inadequate as they are.

> "What this means is that for three months we have not paid our rentals, utility bills and accounts, school fees for our children who are now school dropouts, food for our families and not to mention our extended families", wrote the thin and bone looking employees. "The truth of the matter is you have a demoralized and impoverished staff complement at ZBC whose basic workers' rights continue to be violated despite the fact that it is us who keep the machine running", said the undernourished employees visibly looking worried because most of them did not know when, where and how their next meal would come.

Head of ZBC public relations instead of chipping in to save the sorry and sad looking situation, Swukile Simango, refused to comment on the 'lame excuse he was on leave". But is someone on leave suddenly lost his right to comment on burning issues at the financially hamstring ZBC? Repeated efforts to get a comment from then Minister of Information, Media and Broadcasting Service, Honourable Webster Shamu proved futile as he falsely claimed to be in meetings for the greater part of the day. His Excellence President Mugabe's Spokesman George Charamba and Happison Muchechetere the truant ZBC CEO could also not be reached for comment (Staff Reporter 2014).

But the fact of the matter if we were to shame the devil is that all of these people, Simango, Honourable Shamu, Charamba and Muchechetere wanted to distance themselves from the sad and sorry situation then unraveling at ZBC. In this modern world of increasing complexity, things should not be allowed to sink to the level that the financially troubled ZBC had reached. Against this background the appeal by ZBC employees came at a time His Excellence President Mugabe had been accused of spending millions of tax payers' money onglobe-trotting when the economy back home was burning like a veld firs (Staff reporter 2014).

Proverbially speaking, *Kakara kununa hudya kamwe* (meaning a predatory animal is fat from preying on the weaker animals which are hunted and killed for food) this is the epitome of the sad and sorry situation as it obtains at the financially troubled ZBC. Again details on this coming your way in just a moment.

l) Management getting hefty allowances (Staff Reporter 2014)

To add more sorrow to an already awe-inspiring story the financially troubled ZBC employees claim that they are sometimes given what they described as paltry US$ 60 and US$ 100 advanced on different days of the month for not only their sustenance but to 'shut up' or risk dismissal by the arrogant ZBC management. Out of nothing but shear greed ZBC management has on several occasions been accused of awarding themselves heftly weekly allowances running into thousands of US$ every month while junior and middle management go home empty-handed to spell doom for not only their immediate families but their extended families. The financially troubled ZBC employees claimed that they were forced to form a workers credit union in which they were contributing against their will (Staff Reporter 2014). But the reality is, it is a form of banking on behalf of the arrogant ZBC management to get advances and loans some of which are ever repaid.

Proverbially speaking for the criminally enterprising Happison Muchechetere, the ZBC CEO for his inability to 'keep out of trouble let us say *ishiri ine murириro way,* (meaning a bird whether domestic or wild is distinguished by the unique noise that it makes). That the Daily News of 9 February 2014 came out with a lead story that the same man was in more troubles involving fresh cash scandals is therefore not a complete surprise. For the sumptuous details these fresh cash scandals details coming your way in just a moment.

m) Muchechetere in fresh cash scandals (Mananavire 2014)

Hanzi vakuru vakati netsumo, manga chena inoparira parere nhema (meaning during the dark night a white animal on or along the road is more visible than its black counterpart which in the process is betrayed by its white animal). In other words discover the white which is more visible at night in order to also discover the black animal which is less visible at night.

According to Mananavire (2014) it was revealed that the suspended ZBC CEO Happison Muchechetere accused of plundering the bankrupt broadcaster through obscene salaries and allowances reportedly paid himself US$90 000 in yearly bonuses. The documents in possession of the Daily News show that Muchechetere's huge salary and allowances were unilaterally approved by the fired ZBC Board Chairman Cuthbert Dube. The documents showed that Muchechetere was taking home US$ 22 500 per quarter in bonuses. Although ZBC never made any money to

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sustain the bonus payments for the CEO. Muchechetere bonus payments came at a time the cashless ZBC was wallowing in a US$ 40 million debt and was failing to pay workers. What alarmed government is that in the case of ZBC top managers at state controlled public enterprises in connivance with their different boards awarded themselves huge allowances inflated to make up for their lower salaries (Mananavire 2014).

The then new Information Minister Honourable Professor Jonathan Moyo was forced by circumstances to dismiss the entire ZBC board and send Muchechetere the CEO on forced leave after he failed to draft a turnaround strategy for the ailing ZBC. Muchechetere was taking home a package of US$ 40 000 from a company whose revenues were US$ 275 000.00 per month against a budget of US$ 2.3 million of which US$ 1 million went to salaries. In a bid to bring sanity to the state broadcasters salary wage bill government had slashed the salaries of employees saying the broadcaster's wage bill was unsustainable because they had been single handedly approved by the then fired Cuthbert Dube, who was then Board chairman. There was mention of housing loans of US$ 200 000.00 advanced to Muchechetere and other top officials along with various other generous hefty allowances (Mananavire 2014).

For the criminal enterprising Muchechetere it never rains but pours for him. He was also involved in a US$ 1 million scandal in which he allegedly inflated the purchase price of a radio Outside Broadcasting (OB) van from a Chinese firm the true value of the OB van was US$ 100 000.00 but this was inflated to US$ 1050 000.00 by Muchechetere in connivance with Instrimpex Officials. As the scandals rock state-owned enterprises the following unpleasant stories emerged:

- Several state owned enterprises had no boards in place
- Some boards are not meeting at all to leave the CEOs to run the show uninterrupted
- Other boards lack the necessary skills to add no value to the decision making of their boards
- Boards are often deliberately raising salaries of CEOs because the level of their allowances is linked to the CEO's salary (Mananavire 2014).

This is a typical scratch my back so that I scratch yours baboon and monkey trick in corporate governance in all state owned enterprises.

There is no systematic board members selection and training as a result of which most board members are not sufficiently equipped to effectively carry out their Board duties all loss making parastatals like National Railways of Zimbabwe, Grain Marketing Board the defunct Cold Storage Commission, among others should be subjected to Commissions of enquiry to look into their operations with an eagle eye for any corruption activities. Most scandals are procurement related where prices are inflated to unrealistic levels to satisfy their self-serving egos.

> "There is clear connivance between heads of parastatals, Boards and the private sector to steal money through inflating invoices. A case in point is the ZBC issue where an OB van for US$ 100 000 was invoiced for US$ 1 000 000.00. This was rampant corruption which is dogging everyparastatal" said the source who chose anonymity for fear of victimization (Mananavire 2014).

But most disappointing to the Author is the omission of the Honourable Minister in the equation of corruption in the parastatal'ssector. So far no one has had the guts to implicate the Honourable Minister in all these baboon and monkey tricks. The Author chooses to be different and implicates the minister in the equation of corruption in all state enterprises.

Gama (2014) the group editor of the Daily news is very much worried about why His Excellence President Mugabe has never uttered a word in condemnation of the rampant endemic corruption playing havoc in all state-owned enterprise. Let's hear what he has to say about corruption is below.

n) Act on corruption Mr. President (Gama 2014)

His Excellence President Mugabe must wake up and speak his mind on the corruption scourge which is threatening to tear the country apart. With the evidence clear for all to see public institutions are wreaking havoc on the economy of the country and the sooner he speaks his mind the better for the poor and weak who are always on the receiving end when corruption takes place in a country. His Excellence President is caught between a rock and a hard surface, With the President's spokesman George Charamba neck deep in the throes of corruption at PSMAS what else can His Excellence President Mugabe when proverbially speaking people say *chakawanahamahachisekanwe* (meaning criticizing your wife in public to as good as self-criticism). His Excellence watched while Charamba immersing himself into more of corruption at PSMAS to lend both of them into serious problems. Will in those circumstances, His Excellence President Mugabe have the guts to speak against corruption when corruption is also evident in his backyard, Since independence from Britain in 1980 His Excellence has looked when his top cabinet ministers were involved in corruption (Gama 2014).

What is clear from the scandals rocking state enterprises country wide is that ministers are involved and for once his Excellence President Mugabe must severely punish those caught at the wrong end of the law. Being a minister does not mean one is above the law and His Excellence President Mugabe must use all the powers in him to show his corrupt minister that he

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does not condone corruption from whatever is the perpetrators. In the 1980s the Willow gate scandal in which cabinet ministers used their influence to buy cars cheap and resell them at a profit saw ministers resigning and one of them, Maurice Nyagumbo went on to commit suicide and he must be turning in his grave to question why he ever did it when today so many ministers are allowed to get away with murder. His Excellence President Mugabe must come out in the open and question the Local Government Minister Honourable Ignatius Chombo what he is trying to achieve through his re-instatement of the Harare Town Clerk, the criminal enterprising Tendai Mahachi. What on this globe is Honourable Chombo trying to hide? His Excellence must confront head on the Honourable David Parirenyatwa Minister of health to get an understanding of the looting spree at PSMAS he must ask the former Minister of Transport what is happening at Air Zimbabwe and at Zimbabwe National Road Authority (ZINARA) and he must ask the former Minister of Information Honourable Webster Shamu on the looting spree at ZBC. His Excellence President Mugabe has been chided for not taking action against corrupt officials and it's now or never (Gama 2014).

People interviewed in Harare, the city where this PSMAS scandal took place all expressed public outrage at Dube's mega salary. For more on the story details on the way coming to you.

o) Outrage over Dube's mega salary (Mbanje 2014)

Members of the public have reacted angrily over media reports Dube was earning stratospheric salary amounting to US$ 500 000 with some wrong the government to seize some of his properties financial from public looting.

The public outcry in Harare was that despite having relieved of his post at financially troubled PSMAS people generally felt that the criminally enterprising Dube got off too easily ad wanted him to be held to account (Mbanje 2014).

Charumbira from Avondale was not happy with glove treatment given to Dube whom they accused of taking a whopping US$ 230 000 when others at the same state owned enterprise were earning peanuts. Charumbira, a PSMAS member said he had bottled anger for Dube because all service providers were unwilling to offer service to PSMAS members for nonpayment by PSMAS.

> "He (Dube) has razed PSMAS to the ground and it is not fair because people are contributing faithfully every month. They should seize some of his property to compensate for, what he selfishly took", said Charumbira (Mbanje 2014).

Dube, another of the stakeholder interviewed said that the salary was just too much and not so many people in the world earned that kind of money.

> "We are struggling and yet someone has the audacity to shamelessly take a salary that high. It is a pure case of fraud. He should pay back some of the money", Muchinjika said in protest.

Chihwerure said he was shocked by the news that a person in Zimbabwe can earn that kind of money.

> "I was shocked and even now I cannot believe that someone was getting that enough that that the likes of Happison Muchechetere (former ZBC CEO) was getting US$ 27 000 excluding the parks, but US$ 230 000," said Chihwerure. (Mbanje 2014).

Tembalami from Greencroft was equally bitter when he said that Dube should be fired from all the other positions he holds because he was not of a good standing to society. Dube is currently the Zifa Chairman and was recently fired at the ZBC where he was Chairman of the Board.

> "He should be fired from all the other public offices and some of his properties should be seized, period", said Thembalani.

Some people chose to differ when they said Dube was not to blame. Matthew Chitsero said:

> "It is not really Dube's problem or fault. The board must have approved these salaries. Dube actually lifted the standards of PSMAS, so it is not fair to blame him. His only crime is that he lacks morals and basic human principles", said Matthew Chitsero.

The salaries of the eight managers amounted to US$ 1 million, while PSMAS's unpaid debts totaled US$ 38 million. In what the Author believes was a rough ride on the stakeholders wishes the PSMAS board of directors resolved to relieve Dube of his post citing retirement age when the sordid story of his obscene salary was made public (Mbanje 2014).

Vane nzeve vazvinzwira (meaning, those with ears have heard it verbatim). What remain undone are the Summary, Conclusion and recommendation. Thereafter, it is time for the key assumption before the Researcher closes the discourse with a short prayer for the country to get a reprieve from endemic corruption and its damaging consequences.Without much ado it is time for Summary which is up next.

III. Summary

The Introduction of this Paper is pre-occupied with the question: Was a crime committed or not when a CEO of a state owned enterprises earned a mega salary approved by a state appointed body? To answer that question a short relevant literature review was carried out in which all the various stakeholders were sounded for their opinion and first to give his contribution was Matenga who reported that a bloated management

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team at Town House was gobbling US$ 500 000.00 in mega salaries when the lower level employees were wallowing in abject poverty.

For public looting at PSMAS where Dube was earning a whopping US$ 230 000.00 monthly salary he was first fired and later on retired on a US$ 20 million exit package which torched a public outrage by the affected stakeholders.

Zvauya (2014) reported that the law makers in parliament had recommended that Cuthbert Dube be indicted for razing PSMAS to the ground with his outrageous salary. From PSMAS the salary storm enters Town House where a bloated management team of 18 managers were gobbling US$ 500 000 in mega salaries to spark a public outrage with the Combined Harare Residents Association who on behalf of the Harare Residents protested very loudly by threatening the boycott of payment of rates and other dues (CHRA 2014).

The issue of mega salaries is treated as corruption by Kajau (2014) who proposes that the issue of mega salaries by CEOs of state – owned enterprises be treated as naked corruption were stern measures should be taken against the perpetrators.

A surprise announcement is made that Cuthbert Dube was off the hook for his mega salary scandal (Muzulu 2014). Harare Town Clerk is suspended for, among others the mega salary scandal but Honourable Minister Chombo reinstates him in a show of power against the Harare, Mayor Bernard Manyenyeni (Malenga 2014).

According to Madanhire (2014) corruption not only increases the cost of business but makes the earning of profit an uncertainty. The ZBC employees had not been paid their salaries for three months and President Mugabe to intervene in order to save life and limb (Staff Reporter 2014).

While management was getting hefty allowances the lower level employees at ZBC were going home empty handed to cause disgruntlement which propelled them to appeal to His Excellence President Mugabe to intervene.

The ZBC CEO Happison Muchechetere is again caught in fresh cash scandals of paying himself unauthorized bonuses and inflating the price of an OD van from US$ 100 000.00 to US$ 1 million and in the process pocketing the difference.

Gama (2014) urges His Excellence President Mugabe to speak out his mind on corruption as his continued silence on the issue is creating disquiet among the various stakeholders. And finally there is public outrage in Harare over Dube's mega salary (Mbanje 2014).

With the Summary out of the way up next is the Conclusion made in the context of the relevant literature review and research findings which is up next.

IV. Conclusion

According to Kenkel (1984) a conclusion is a choice between two conflicting statements called the Null (H_0) Research Hypothesis and the Alternative Research Hypothesis (H_1). according to the relevant literature review and research findings the Null (H_0) hypothesis for this study is: There is no problem of mega salaries in the parastatals sector in Zimbabwe. The Alternative hypothesis (H_1) for the same study is: There is indeed a serious problem of mega salaries in the parastatals sector in Zimbabwe.

Given the overwhelming evidence unearthed during the study the Alternative Research hypothesis (H_1) as above is to be accepted at the expense of the Null ($H_{0)}$ Research hypothesis which is to be rejected.With the Conclusion now conveniently out of the way up next are the Recommendations.

V. Recommendations

The argument in the public domain is that the parastatal's sector in Zimbabwe is the feeding trough of most cabinet ministers. His Excellence President knows very well that the relevant cabinet minister knows what was happening vis-à-vis the issue of mega salaries at the under listed parastatals:

- Harare City Council
- PSMAS
- ZBC
- Air Zimbabwe

The problem at Harare City Council is not the Harare Town Clerk, Tendai Mahachi who is a mere side show. The problem at PSMAS is not the PSMAS CEO who is another side show. The problem at ZBC is not the ZBC CEO, Happison Muchechetere who is again another side show. The problem at Air Zimbabwe is gain not the CEO who is another side show. The buck as the Author sees it stops at the relevant minister. His Excellence President Mugabe must take head on every relevant cabinet minister to explain what is happening in his ministry. For a cabinet minister to be in charge of a ministry he must be held to account for everything that takes place in that ministry. Therefore *kunetsana kwese kwatiri kuita naana Dube, Muchechetere, Mahachi* etc is a sheer waste of time and energy. Confront the appropriate minister to give an explanation. If he can't then fire him and not Dube, Muchechetere or Mahachi who are mere scapegoats. For today the Author will park his bus right here to prepare for the key assumption which is up next.

VI. Key Assumption

In presenting this paper the Author would, right from the outset, wish to reassure the beloved Reader

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that the facts and figures herein contained were stated as they are on the ground without fear, or and prejudice.

Again in whatever people do it is always appropriate to start and end with a short prayer targeting the Almighty God and the country's Ancestral Spirits so that the scourge of corruption should not continue to wreak havoc on the already HIV inflicted and suffering people of Zimbabwe

VII. Closing Prayer

Mwari wesimba rose nechiedza, muvambi nemukwanisi wekutenda kwedu, isai munesu rudo rwezita renyu, wedzerai munesu kumutendai kwechokwadi, ipai kunesu kunaka kwenyu kwese, tidzivirirei mabasa akaipa ose, tipei nyasha dzenyu huru tichengetwe nomaari nekunaJesu Kristu Tenzi wedu Amen.

(meaning Lord of all power and might, the author and giver of all good things, graft in our hearts the love of your name increase in us true religion, guard us against corruption, nourish in us all goodness and of your great mercy. Keep us in the same through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen).

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