

Rampant corruption rocks city treasury

Tuesday, 04 August 2009

Last Updated Tuesday, 04 August 2009

16 July 2009 CHRA has received disturbing reports from some sources within the Harare City Council to the effect that there is rampant corruption in the City Treasury. It is alleged that ratepayers' money is leaking from the City Treasury to ZANU PF coffers. The news comes in the midst of the City's failure to restore quality municipal service delivery claiming that they are facing financial constraints.

Sources within Council have pointed out that the City's Finance Director, Mr. Zvikaramba has fallen out of grace with Councilors who accuse him of approving the disbursement of funds from the City Treasury without Council approval. It has been revealed that a couple of thousands of dollars are finding their way out of the City Treasury and they are allegedly feeding into ZANU PF coffers. There are some allegations that the ZANU PF party is continuing with its tradition of heavily relying on the City of Harare for its financial survival. Mr. Zvikaramba is said to be receiving instructions from the Minister of Local Government to release money from the City Treasury. Some Councilors have pointed out that this is the reason why the Minister of Local Government, Ignatius Chombo, continues to heavily interfere with the affairs of Town House. They have also said this is the reason why the City's former Finance Director, Mr. Mubvumbi was relieved of his duties on flimsy allegations which the Minister has failed to substantiate to date. The Councilors said that Mubvumbi was professional in his work and he would not release money anyhow; a situation that subsequently led to his unfair suspension. The Minister of Local Government's strong support for Zvikaramba emanates from his (Zvikaramba's) allegiance to the Minister rather than to the Council. Residents are deeply concerned with these incidences of corruption that have the potential to permanently cripple the City's financial capacity and take away any hope for the revival of quality municipal service delivery in Harare. These reports come barely six months after 300 of the Council's cattle disappeared from the City's farm at Crowborough. The sad thing is that the Minister did not do anything to bring the culprits to book. Residents cannot continue to pay their hard earned money to satisfy the greed of inconsiderate politicians and we thereby make the following demands; That an urgent inquiry into the issue of the leaking of funds be made by an independent commission set up by Councilors. Professional and independent auditors should be engaged to conduct an audit into the operations and accounts of the City's Finance Department. Proper systems and procedures should be put in place to govern the use and disbursement of money within the City Treasury to ensure transparency and accountability. The current situation where the Town Clerk and Finance Director are the only signatories to the City's accounts is not acceptable. The Chairperson of the Finance Committee should also be part of the signatories. CHRA remains committed to advocating for good, transparent and accountable local governance and lobbying for quality municipal (and other) service delivery on a non partisan basis.