

April 26, 2017

ZAMBIA FLASH NOTE**Update on the Hichilema trial**

1) After a week-long adjournment, the proceedings against Hakainde Hichelema resumed in the Magistrate's Court today, the Prosecution having amended the bogus charge originally filed¹, to the even more preposterous indictment of having *"endeavour[ed] to usurp by force the executive power of the State."*²

2) Unimpressed, Magistrate Greenwell Malumani ruled that **the State had failed to adduce evidence** of any act by HH and/or his co-accused consistent with an attempt to overthrow the government. However, since his court lacked the jurisdiction to dismiss a treason charge, he was compelled to refer the case to the High Court.

3) In the interim, acting in his capacity as President of the Zambian Conference of Catholic Bishops, the **Archbishop of Lusaka has issued a 2,500 word statement** denouncing the government's transparent attempt to manipulate the justice system. Two brief excerpts provide a sense of the Bishops' collective indignation:

- *"The political environment in Zambia, today, is characterised by manipulation, patronage and intimidation of perceived government opponents."*
- *"We as Shepherds of the Catholic Church in our country are deeply saddened by the incidents of unprofessional and brutal conduct of the Police Service, the damage to the innocent citizens' property by suspected cadres, the arbitrary arrests of and horrific torture of suspects as well as the careless, inflammatory and divisive statements of our political leaders."*

4) Not to be outdone, the Southern Africa chapter of Amnesty International has issued a press release captioned, **"Drop trumped-up treason charges against opposition leader and release him immediately"** that bluntly declares:

"Hakainde Hichilema and the other arrested members of the United Party for National Development (UPND) are victims of longstanding persecution by the Zambian authorities stemming from their political activities and last year's disputed election."

5) Predictably, the reaction from "the Street" has been considerably more violent. Starting on the day HH and his supporters were arrested two weeks ago, there has been **a wave of arson attacks** targeting court houses, shops and university buildings across the country³. The response from Mr. Lungu has been to threaten to declare a state of emergency.

6) It is worth noting that Zambia was not even mentioned during the IMF's African department press briefing last week-end. Even the most dogged optimists will have heard in this diplomatic silence **a firm dismissal of Mr. Mutati's fanciful prediction** a week ago that *"a USD 1.6 billion programme [for Zambia] can be presented to the board sometime end of June, beginning of July."*⁴

¹ I.e. endangering the life of the President – whose motorcade it was that executed the dangerous manoeuvres in the relevant traffic incident.

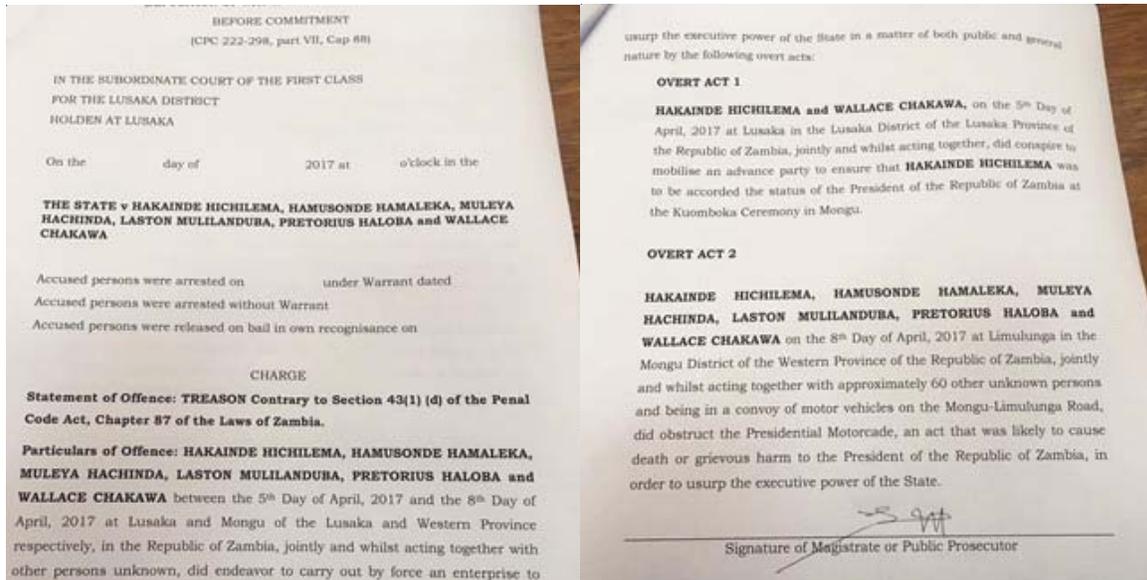
² See facsimile copy reproduced overleaf.

³ Interestingly enough, there have been no attacks in the capital to date.

⁴ See ["Zambia Seeks IMF Deal of as Much as \\$1.6 Billion This Month"](#), posted by Bloomberg on Apr. 18, 2017.

7) Since the prospect of such a programme, together with the improved outlook for copper, have been the two props supporting Zambian asset prices, the outlook is now shaky. Clearly, **any further deterioration of the fraught political situation could deliver the coup de grâce.**

Facsimile copy of Indictment against Hakainde Hichilema



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